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# **THE FRINGE OF THE EAST**



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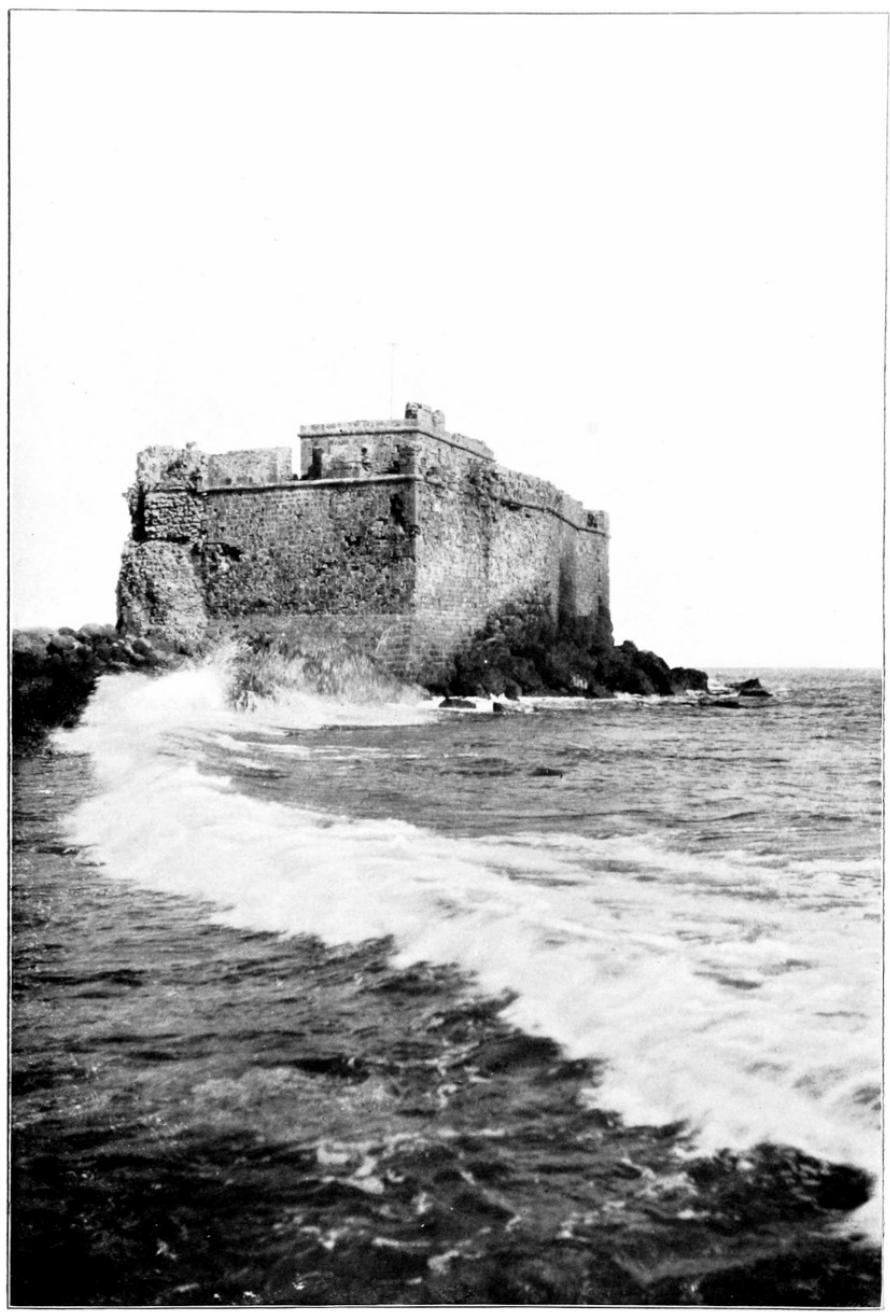
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THE CASTLE OF PAPHOS

Frontispiece.





# THE FRINGE OF THE EAST

A JOURNEY THROUGH PAST AND  
PRESENT PROVINCES OF TURKEY

BY

HARRY CHARLES LUKACH

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1913

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**TO MY PARENTS**



## PREFACE.

A DISTINGUISHED French writer, the late Vicomte E. M. de Vogüé, once declared of the East: “L’Orient, qui ne sait plus faire d’histoire, a le noble privilége de conserver intacte celle d’autrefois.” This sentence seemed just and true at the time when I returned from the journey which this book describes, that is to say, two months before the outbreak of the constitutional revolution in Constantinople in 1908; but in the period which has elapsed since then events have occurred which have destroyed its relevance and have changed many things in the regions with which I am here concerned. The East is again making history, and, in the process, it seems likely that some of the records of its past will fail to be preserved intact. So many vicissitudes have lately befallen the Turkish Empire that it has not been possible to adapt this book to every changing phase. Consequently, in so far as it deals with the political status and conditions of the Ottoman provinces through which my journey took me, it describes them as they were toward the close of the reign of 'Abdu'l Hamid.

The bulk of the photographs which form the illustrations are my own; but my thanks are due to my travelling companion, Mr. Harry Pirie-Gordon, to

whom I am also indebted in many other respects, to Colonel the Hon. J. P. Napier, travelling companion during the latter part of the journey, and to Mr. Guy Dickins, of St. John's College, Oxford, for three photographs each. For the use of the photographs of Subh-i-Ezel and his funeral I have to thank Mr. T. Moghabghab of Famagusta.

H. C. LUKACH.

NICOSIA,

*February, 1913.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

SOME five hundred years ago there lived in Asia Minor, in the little town of Aqshehir, which lies between Afium Karahissar and the ancient Seljuq capital of Konia, the Khoja Nasr ed-Dîn Effendi of happy and genial memory. At Aqshehir he died and was buried ; and his tomb may be seen to-day by the traveller on the Baghdad Railway, surmounted by the gigantic green turban which he affected. The Khoja was a village Imâm, a sort of country parson, yet it is not to sanctity or learning that his celebrity is due. Of these attributes he had but little store. It is as the classical exponent of Turkish humour, as the hero of adventures which usually end in his scoring off other people, and also as the peg on which similar tales of later invention are hung, that he has made his name a household word wherever Turkish is spoken.

And that is my excuse for prefixing to a book dealing solely with lands that are or once were Turkish a few of these ‘Khoja stories’ as they were related to me in the course of my journey. There are hundreds of them in circulation, disclosing the curious blend of buffoonery and shrewdness, of cunning and naiveté, of which the Khoja’s character is composed ; and they are recounted and listened to with gusto by the country

Turks, many of whom know no other form of literary enjoyment:

One day a man went to the Khoja, and asked for the loan of his donkey. The Khoja replied that the donkey was not there, but at that moment the beast brayed and so betrayed its presence.

"Ah, so the donkey is here after all?" said the man.

"O Fool, begone! Would'st thou believe my donkey before me?"

On another occasion the Khoja borrowed a donkey from a Jew, to whom he refused to return it; so the Jew haled him before the Qadi. They rode together into town, the Jew on a mule and the Khoja on the stolen beast. It began to rain, and as the Khoja had no cloak, the Jew, who had two, on being asked, very obligingly lent him his spare one.

Plaint was made, and when the Jew had finished speaking, the Qadi said: "O Khoja, why hast thou robbed this Jew?"

"Robbed this Jew! O Learned among Qadis, O pattern of Judges, may thy wisdom ever increase! Hearken not, I beg, to this abominable Jew. I have stolen the fellow's donkey, have I? Why, he will be saying next that the very coat I wear is his!"

"Of course it is mine," cried the Jew.

"O Jew," said the Qadi, "thou art a knave, a liar, and a Jew! Get thee gone, and slander no more this just man."

The Khoja returned home in high feather and began to think of himself as somebody, forgetting in his pride to give due glory to Allah; and it fell out that he said to his wife: "To-morrow I sow."

"Insha'llah!" said his wife, which means 'God-willing.'<sup>1</sup>

"No," said the Khoja, "willing or unwilling—to-morrow I sow."

And he set out on his stolen donkey with seed corn; but he happened upon a thunderstorm so fierce and violent that he was swept off the back of the beast, his corn was scattered, and the donkey drowned. When he came home, soaked and wretched, and knocked at his door, his wife called out: "Who is there?"

"I am the Khoja, if God will."

Next day the Jew mocked at him, for his mishap had been reported; wherefore the Khoja, desiring to be even with the Jew, bethought him how to set about it. Now the Jew was a dealer in silk, and the Khoja asked him quite politely if he would buy silk from him. Said the Jew, "yes." So the Khoja went into the next street, bought some silk of another merchant, and went to where the drowned donkey lay. Having cut off its head, he swathed it in the silk, and bore it to the Jew.

"What a huge bale you have brought!" said he.

"Yes, it is an 'ass's head' of a lot," replied the Khoja, for the Turks use that word to imply a big bulk; "you will buy, will you not?"

The Jew agreed, and for some time they chaffered about the price. Finally the Jew weighed the bale, and paid for it by the oke.<sup>2</sup>

When he discovered the fraud, he haled the Khoja for a second time before the Qadi, and complained of the deception.

<sup>1</sup> "Say not thou of a thing, 'I will surely do it to-morrow'; without, 'If God will.'" *Qoran*, xviii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> A Turkish measure:  $2\frac{4}{5}$  lbs.

"No deception at all," said the Khoja; "I sold it to him as an ass's head."

Despite his lack of learning, the Khoja had contrived to make himself the oracle of his fellow-villagers, and was often consulted by them on every sort of subject. One day a camel passed along the street in which the Khoja lived, and one of the Khoja's neighbours, who had never seen a camel before, ran to ask him what this strange beast might be.

"Don't you know what that is?" said the Khoja, who also had never seen a camel, but would not betray his ignorance; "that is a hare a thousand years old."

A great man once gave a feast to which, with much condescension, he caused the Khoja to be bidden. Accordingly, on the appointed day the Khoja repaired to the great man's house, and found himself in the midst of a fashionable and richly clad assembly which took no notice of the poor Imâm in his threadbare black gown. No one greeted him or spoke to him, and eventually he was shown by a servant to the lowest seat. After a little while, the Khoja slipped away unobserved, and went into the hall where some of the mighty ones had left their outer garments. Selecting a magnificent gown richly lined with fur, he put it on and returned to the room. Nobody recognized as the Khoja this resplendent personage whose arrival excited universal attention. The company rose to salute him, and the host, who had previously ignored him, approached bowing, and inquired after his honourable health.

The Khoja stroked the sleeve of his borrowed garment.

"Answer, fur!" he said.

Three men who had a sack of walnuts were quarrelling about the division, when the Khoja came by.

"O Khoja, come and help us," said the first, "for we cannot agree upon the division of these walnuts among us three. Make thou the division."

"Yea, divide with absolute justice!" said the second.

"Nay, justice even is not enough," said the third.  
"Divide as Allah would divide."

So the Khoja agreed and took the walnuts. "Then am I to make division as would Allah?"

"Yea, as would Allah," said all three.

Whereupon he gave one walnut to the third man, and a handful to the second man, and all the rest to the first.

"How now, Khoja, what is this? Dost thou call this an equal division?"

"O Fools, when did Allah divide anything equally among men? As would Allah, so have I divided."

## CHAPTER I.

### MONASTERIES OF THE LEVANT.

*St. Luke in Stiris—Meteora—Mount Athos.*

THOSE who travel by sea anywhere but along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and wish to ascertain beforehand how much their passages will cost them, are able to do so to a nicety by reference to printed documents which the steamship companies supply. In the Levant such documents, although plentiful, have to be classed among works of fiction, highly imaginative ; and it is usually the law of supply and demand which sets upon your journey its ever fluctuating price. When, therefore, on a cold, clear December morning we left the solid comforts of the British School of Archaeology in Athens, and, having arrived at the Piraeus, demurred at paying 15 drachmae a head for conveyance to Itea, the agent of one of the most forbidding little craft that disgraced the Gulf of Corinth frankly explained :

“ Ah, had you come yesterday, when both the *Thermopylae* and the *Diadochos*<sup>1</sup> *Konstantinos* were competing for passengers to Delphi, doubtless you might have gone for 8 drachmae. To-day, happily, the *Lordos Buron* has no rival.”

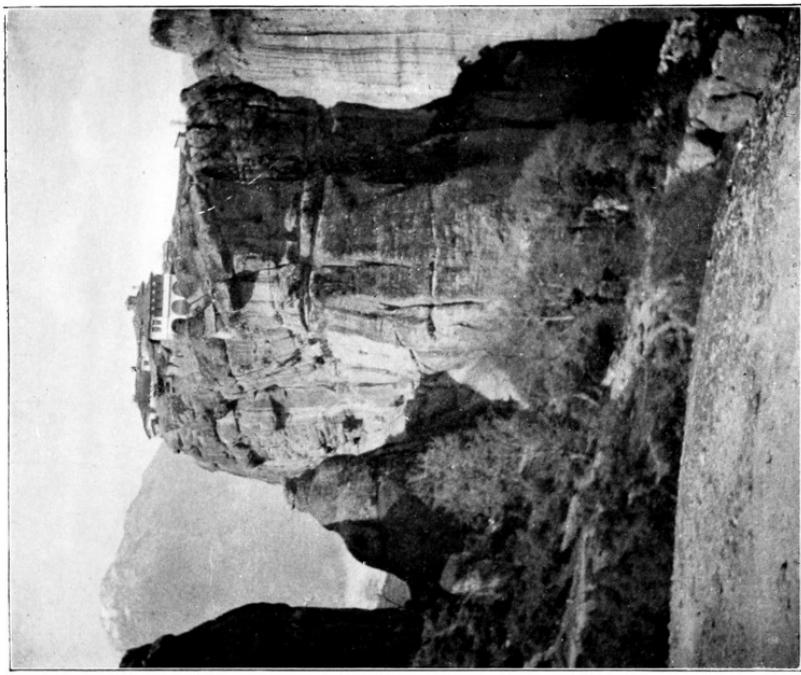
<sup>1</sup> Crown Prince.

So in the *Lordos Buron* we passed between Salamis and Aegina, passed through the Corinth Canal, which was projected by the Emperor Nero and opened by King George of Greece, and in due course arrived at Itea, still, as in ancient times, the port of Delphi for those not journeying overland from the north, but now a decayed little village having nothing but Parnassus, its background, to commend it. From Itea a modern carriage road winds up the side of the mountain, intersected at intervals by vestiges of the straight processional path along which the pilgrims from the Peloponnese rode, walked, and danced to the great shrine of Pythian Apollo. Both toward the Gulf and inland the views are very lovely ; and it is easy to understand how Delphi, by the impressive beauty of its rugged, lofty, and thickly wooded surroundings, arrested the imagination of ancient Greece so deeply as to become the seat of the oracle which made of it 'the navel of the world.' On this occasion, however, our principal objective was not Delphi but the ancient monastery of St. Luke in Stiris, which lies in Phocis to the south-east of Parnassus ; and our visit to St. Luke, one of the most important Byzantine monuments in Greece, was intended as a preparation for visits to Meteora and Mount Athos, the one a bygone, the other a yet vigorous centre of Byzantine monasticism.

Owing to their numbers, their wealth, and their influence, the monasteries play, and have played from early times, an exceedingly important part in the life of the Levant. The oriental mind has always displayed a pronounced leaning towards monasticism. Both in the Turkish Empire itself, as in all the countries which have now become independent of it, the number of

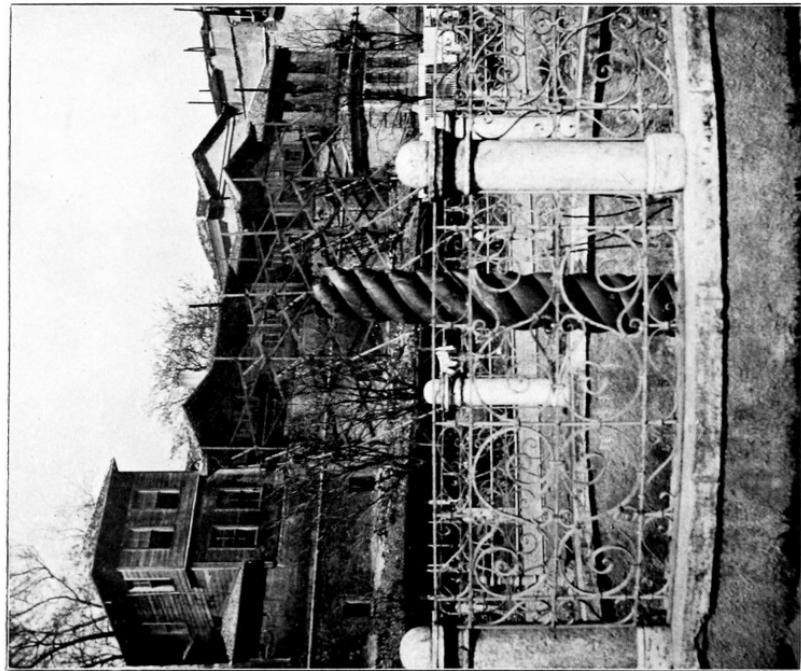
monasteries seems strangely high if assessed by a western standard. The island of Cyprus, for example, with an area of only 3584 square miles, contains no fewer than eighty-two ; and I quote Cyprus, not because it is richer in monasteries than other parts of the East, but because its statistics are more reliable. Wherever, as you travel through Greece, Macedonia, the islands of the Archipelago, Asia Minor, Syria, or Kurdistan, you espy an eligible site, a fruitful valley, a safe and sheltered nook with an abundant supply of water, you are almost certain to find that it houses a settlement of monks. Some monasteries, no doubt, are little more than farms ; others may contain only two or three monks, or even a solitary ascetic. But many have been lavishly endowed in the past by Byzantine Emperors with estates situated in almost every province of the Empire ; and as these estates, known as *μετόχια*, have not been alienated, their possessors continue to derive from them very handsome revenues. To these revenues, again, were often added the pious donations of other Christian potentates, of Hospodars, Voyvodes, Sebastocrats, and Jupans, in Russia, the Balkans, and even the distant Caucasus.

The influence of the monasteries, considerable throughout the Levant, is particularly felt in the Turkish Empire itself. The native inhabitants of European Turkey are divided for administrative purposes into *millet*s or ‘nations,’ which rest on a basis religious rather than racial. Moslems, of whatever race they may be, compose the *millet* of Islam ; and the *rayahs*, that is to say, the Christian subjects of the Porte, form separate *millet*s according as they acknowledge the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Pope, the



HAGIA TRIAS, METEORA

Facing p. 8.



THE SERPENT COLUMN FROM DELPHI : NOW IN THE  
ATMEIDAN, CONSTANTINOPLE



Bulgarian Exarch, the Armenian Katholikos, or the Protestant Vekil, as their ecclesiastical superior. As a result of this system, and of the fact that to each Christian *millet* a measure of autonomy is given, the churches in Turkey are not only spiritual refuges, but the rallying-grounds of national aspirations ; the head of a church is not only a spiritual chief, he is also a political ethnarch. And while the Church thus becomes the backbone of national existence and propaganda, the monastery is very largely the backbone of the Church. In the eastern churches only celibate or widowed priests and deacons can attain episcopal orders ; the hierarchy is recruited in consequence extensively from the ranks of the regular clergy. Thus there are concentrated in the monasteries not only those who seek to retire from the world, but many eager and ambitious spirits whose aim is precisely the reverse. All large monasteries, especially those of Mount Athos, are fruitful nurseries of bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs ; also, owing to the frequent depositions of the latter, havens of refuge whence these intrigue for the downfall of their successors. Often, moreover, in the Orthodox, and habitually in the other eastern churches, bishops reside permanently in monasteries and govern their sees from them ; all of which will serve to indicate the weight of monastic influence on the spiritual and political affairs of the Levant.

Eastern monasteries have yet another function, to which travellers off the beaten track will gratefully bear witness. In many outlying parts of the Near and Middle East they are the only substitutes for hotels, the only establishments where strangers may be sure to find both food and shelter. No monastery, however

small, is without a guest-chamber and accommodation for beasts ; and the guest-master (*ἀρχοντάρης* or *ξενοδόχος*) is one of the recognized monastic officials. In theory the hospitality of the monks is at the free disposal of all who ask for it, but in practice it is usual for the guest, on departure, to leave a small sum of money, calculated according to the length of his stay, in the alms-dish inside the church. The only exception to this custom, in my experience, is made on Mount Athos, where the monks not only refuse money, but even provide free transport in the shape of mules to carry visitors from one monastery to another.

From the archaeological and artistic points of view the monasteries are no less important than from the political and the religious. Themselves examples of early Byzantine architecture in both its religious and its domestic forms, they enshrine treasures of every manifestation of Byzantine artistic and intellectual activity. Curzon's *Visits to the Monasteries of the Levant* first revealed to the world in general the abundance of mosaics, frescoes, *orfèvrerie*, and priceless manuscripts which they contained, works of art of whose value and interest their owners were equally oblivious. Those were the days when the leaves of uncial manuscripts were used as covers for jam-pots, when eleventh century illuminated Gospels might be had for the asking. By the time that he had reached the end of his journey Curzon, that fortunate hunter of manuscripts, must have bagged at least a boat-load of his venerable prey. Things have changed, however, in the last eighty years ; and although it is doubtful if the monks now study their literary treasures any more than they did in the time of Tischendorf and Curzon, they

have become more alive to their value. Their remaining manuscripts have been examined, collated, and catalogued by foreign scholars ; their reliquaries and valuable icons have been inventoried and described. The days of looting are over, and the monasteries are once more what they would never have ceased to be but for the slothful and culpable ignorance of the monks—specimens as well as storehouses of the products of a fascinating region and epoch, each one a Musée de Cluny, if the expression may be allowed, of mediaeval Byzantine and early Christian art.

In plan and in appearance they but little recall the well-ordered settlements of western monks and friars. There is no symmetry in the grouping of their buildings, very rarely any attempt at external embellishment. Occupying, as a rule, strategical positions, and enclosed for safety within stout battlemented walls, they have the appearance of fortified towns or villages, which in a sense, indeed, they are. A strong gate-house admits into the monastery ; a tower of observation surmounts its domes and roofs. And within, no stately quadrangles and grassy plots, no sheltered cloisters are found. In the middle of an irregular space stands the principal church of the monastery, the many-domed Katholikon ; around it cluster without method the monastic buildings and dwellings of the monks, of different heights, of different periods, of different materials. Some possess arcaded galleries opening on to the court, others sport innumerable wooden balconies of flimsy and perilous construction. A few paces in front of the Katholikon there generally stands the ancient marble fountain of liturgical ablution from which the Moslems have derived the washing-place attached to every

mosque ; below the cells of the monks are stables, granaries, oil and wine presses, cellars, and every other accessory of a large manor or farm. The agricultural element is, in fact, almost as prominent as the religious ; and the domestics and labourers of the monastery, of both sexes except on Athos, form the bulk of its population. But little attempt is made, as a rule, to keep the monasteries in proper repair, and they are usually exceedingly untidy, when not actually in a state of decay. To this condition, to the charm of site and architecture, and to the intimate blend of the ecclesiastical and the bucolic, they owe a strange picturesqueness very difficult to describe : their massive substructures, their irregular outlines, their tiers of overhanging galleries and roofs, their bizarre medley of towers, walls, and domes, give them more affinity with the Lamaserais of Tibet than with monasteries of western Europe.

Of the peculiar skill which eastern monks have always manifested in the choice of sites, St. Luke presents an admirable example. The monastery, invisible from the west, only comes into sight as you round the hill on one of whose spurs it stands, a spur projecting into a broad semi-circular valley, where the fresh turf and scattered oaks are reminiscent of an English park. From their well-concealed and comfortable retreat the fortunate kaloyers (such is the Greek word for monks ; its literal meaning, 'good old men ') survey a beautiful and peaceful domain, rich and green and sunny, enclosed by the hills as no walls could enclose it, well wooded, well watered, well tilled. Hither, after many wanderings, there came in or about the year 940 the hermit Luke, native of Macedonia and typical product of an age when many sought happiness, and some, per-

haps, distinction, in the practice of austerities which contrasted vividly with the prevailing violence and rudeness of life. Luke had commenced his search for isolation on the slopes of Mount Joannitsa, not far from the spot where, some forty years later, he was to end it. Here, however, his solitude was troubled by the incursions of the Bulgarian Czar Simeon, and he passed on to Corinth, then to Patras, then, ever seeking to leave the world behind him, to Kalamion in Santa Maura. From Kalamion he was driven by an Arab invasion to the small island of Ampelos, and in Ampelos he lived for three years. But he was not yet satisfied. The companionship of the sea disturbed his craving for loneliness ; and again he wandered on—until he found his goal at last in this lovely corner of Phocis, which Parnassus cut off from the habitations of other men.

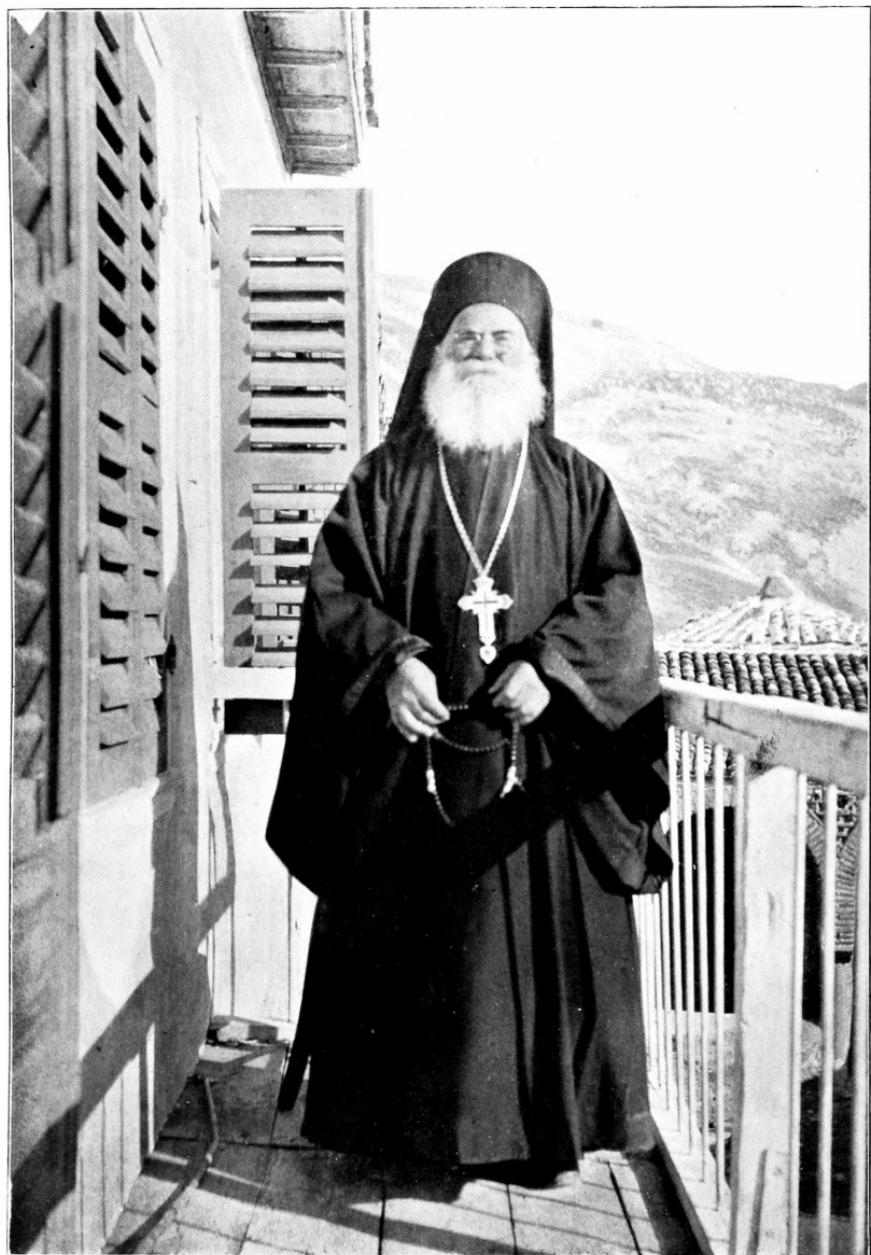
For seven years he enjoyed its quiet delights, and then expired, after having begun to build a chapel which he dedicated to St. Barbara.

It was not long before men told of miracles performed at his tomb ; and in due course the anchorite's retreat became a large and flourishing monastery, the humble chapel of St. Barbara the magnificent church of St. Luke, declared by the seventeenth century traveller Wheler to be second only to that of St. Sophia in Constantinople. That the pilgrims who flocked to the wonder-working tomb were many and generous is attested by the sumptuous decoration of the church : its floor is paved with *opus alexandrinum* ; its walls, from the ground to the spring of the vault, are faced with slabs of rare marbles of divers colours, the spoil, no doubt, of many earlier buildings. Finally, in accordance with a principle of Byzantine architecture only

applicable to churches of great wealth, every inch of vaulting was adorned with rich mosaics, which are still, with the exception of those in the dome, in good repair. Soon, too, it was found that one church was unable to accommodate both monks and pilgrims ; and the smaller but almost equally interesting Church of the Theotokos (Mother of God) was accordingly built for the use of the monks on the north side of the other.

We remained a day and a night at St. Luke, and then returned to Athens, riding through Davlia, the ancient Daulis, and joining the railway on the following day by that patched-up monster with a vacant smile, the Lion of Chaeronea. Not long afterwards, we proceeded by sea from the Piraeus to Volo, and touched on the way at Chalcis, the capital of Euboea, which an iron swing-bridge, spanning the strait of Euripus, connects with the mainland. Chalcis is a picturesque place, thanks to its Venetian battlements and Turkish minarets ; and it is remarkable for the mysterious current which, notwithstanding the almost complete absence of tide, four times or so a day changes the otherwise placid strait into the fierce race wherein Aristotle is said to have lost his life in an endeavour to probe its secret. From Volo, a thriving port devoid of interest, a railway runs north-westward through the rich plain of Thessaly to the village of Kalabaka, a distance of a hundred miles ; and from Kalabaka, formerly called Stagous (*eis τοὺς ἁγίους*—to the holy ones), you continue, on foot or on an ass, to the bases of the fantastic natural pillars on whose summits are perched *τὰ μετέωρα μοναστήρια*, the Monasteries of Mid-Air.

At one time a cliff about 1800 feet high rose at this point above the Thessalian plain, its summit forming a



THE ABBOT OF ST. LUKE IN STIRIS

Facing p. 14.



more or less level plateau. In the course of ages erosion has converted this cliff into something like twenty-five vertical pillars, some cylindrical, some polygonal, which stand like giant ninepins above Kalabaka ; and in the fourteenth century Byzantine monks, emulous, perhaps, of the earlier Stylites, or fearful of wars and alarums, built monasteries upon the flat tops of the pillars, the largest of which offer barely an acre or two of surface, the smaller very much less. In days gone by every pillar was capped by a monastery ; in these days only the four monasteries of Meteoron, Hagios Stephanos, Hagios Barlaam, and Hagia Trias possess communities of monks, now rapidly dwindling. In Hagia Roxane death has reduced the number of inmates to one ; and when he, too, disappears, one monastery the more will be added to those which are now uninhabited except by eagles, and are inaccessible to men for want of anyone inside to pull them up. The means of approach to the monasteries of Meteora are of two kinds only : either the visitor must enter a rope basket which is let down for him by the monks (you attract their attention by shouting, or, if that does not avail, by shooting), and is then drawn up by a windlass, bumping the while against the rock ; or, if he be a man of nerve, he may ascend by perilous step-ladders that swing loosely away from the overhanging cliff. How the founders of these establishments originally attained the tops of their respective pillars remains a matter for conjecture ; certain it is that, in the monasteries now deserted, the unburied bones of the last monk to die run small risk of being disturbed. The life of step-ladders not constantly repaired is brief : I attempted the ascent of the abandoned Hagia Mone,

but the decayed ladder gave way at the fifth or sixth rung, and I reverted rapidly to the plain.

We visited each of the inhabited monasteries in turn, beginning with Hagios Stephanos, which, unlike the others, is isolated on three sides only. It is true that on the fourth side a chasm narrow but deep intervenes between it and the adjacent mountain, but in times of peace a drawbridge is conveniently thrown across. The monks of Meteora are more immune from unwelcome visitors, I suppose, than any other community : in Hagios Stephanos it is a matter of drawing up the bridge, in the others of not letting down the bag ; and Armatoles, Antartis, and other importunates threaten and foam in vain. Our Abbot, however, appeared to be quite pleased to see us, and, after bestowing the kiss of peace at the gate, led us into the reception room, from whose loyal walls their Hellenic Majesties, the Diadoch and the Patriarch of Constantinople, beamed in oleographic complacency. Coffee was brought, and jam, and *masticha*, a liqueur of varying nastiness much in vogue in eastern monasteries ; and the Abbot, whose name was Sophronios, inquired politely after the health of the Archbishop of 'Canterviri.' We conversed desultorily till the evening, when a monk conducted us to the guest-chamber and to a supper of fried eggs, goat's milk cheese, and unleavened bread, and left us to our own devices until morning.

On fine days the views from Hagios Stephanos must be superb ; unfortunately, we were afflicted with rain and mist, which only allowed of the briefest glimpses on the one side over the plain, on the other across clefts and abysses to the grotesque forest of hermit-laden pillars. Hagia Trias is, perhaps, the most characteristic of these

monasteries, its ascent the least enjoyable. It has two churches lined with much blackened frescoes depicting austere Byzantine saints, the older of the two being entirely rock-hewn. Meteoron is the highest and largest, and also rejoices in two churches, as well as in a venerable refectory, used, now that the monks are too few to fill it, as a storeroom for grain. Hagios Barlaam proved, however, the most interesting to us, not only because its churches and frescoes were the best preserved, but also because the evening which we spent within its walls was a revelation of what an evening could be in an ancient Byzantine hermitage.

Now the holy Basil, the founder of Greek monasticism, has ordained that four times in the year shall his faithful followers submit to prolonged spells of fasting; and we chanced to arrive at Barlaam as the Advent fast, which continues from the 15th of November until Christmas, was drawing to its close. It chanced also that the Abbot was at this time entertaining some ecclesiastical dignitaries from without. But before I proceed, I should perhaps explain the mysteries of the titles with which the dignitaries of the Orthodox Church are blessed. Patriarchs and the Archbishop of Cyprus are *Μακαρίωτατοι*, Beatitudes, only the Oecumenical Patriarch being *Παναγιότης*, an All-Holiness. Other Archbishops and Metropolitans are *Πανιερώτατοι*, All-Sacred; Suffragans merely *Ιερώτατοι*, Sacred. Abbots and Archimandrites are *Πανοσιολογιώτατοι*, All-Saintly-and-Erudite; but when an Abbot can neither read nor write, when he can only put his thumb to the monastic documents, it is considered more tactful to drop the *Λογιώτατος*, Most-Erudite, and to call him '*Πανοσιώτατε*' tout court. Our Abbot, worthy man, assuredly *Πανο-*

*σιολογιώτατος*, had prepared for his guests as good a spread as season and place allowed. Our portion was tinned lobster and a fowl, that of the fasters black olives, radishes, and a dish of lentils and split peas. *Parmi les convives*, as the French society journals say, we remarked the coadjutor Bishop of Trikkala, the Abbot of Meteoron, a monk of Pentelicus, a stray Archimandrite, and the Abbot our host; while we ate, one of the monks of Barlaam, not privileged to be of the diners, sat on a divan by the wall, and in melancholy tones read exhortations from some ancient book of devotion. Occasionally, too, as the meal progressed and the sour red wine of northern Greece was passed round the table, the Abbot and his friends would solemnly chant a hymn or psalm. Although the fare was simple, it did not lack in quantity, and we sat at table a prodigious time, talking of many things with these excellent monks, whom we found to be, after all, very human. Indeed, it seemed to me that with every circuit of the bottle the ecclesiastical character of their songs was becoming less apparent. We had sat down at seven; at ten, the dinnerless monk abandoned in despair his homilies from the Early Fathers; at eleven, there being no indication that the party was likely to break up, I produced a bottle of rum which I had brought from Athens to keep out the rigorous Thessalian cold. The Abbot poured it out in tumblers, and in an instant the All-Sacred, the All-Saintly, and the All-Erudite were roaring Klephtic ballads at the tops of their voices—but not for long. Men cannot fast for forty days and then drink rum with impunity.

Of the sequel, of *mal de mer* endured by our friends, in strict hierarchical order, from these giddy heights

overhanging the plain, I forbear to speak. We left betimes in the morning, before the place was astir, not wishing, by delay, to become involved in the awful penances which were the fate, no doubt, of our unhappy boon companions.

We now set our faces toward Mount Athos, called by the Greeks the Holy Mountain, *τὸ ἅγιον ὄπος*, a republic of monks which excludes from its territory not only women and the females of all beasts, but even male visitors not provided with letters from the Patriarch of Constantinople or from the official representatives of the monks in Salonika. We obtained our permit in Salonika, and after three days spent in that city of Jews and glorious Byzantine basilicas, embarked for Athos in a Russian pilgrim ship. The S.S. *Azov* had first to pick up a cargo of tobacco at the port of Kavalla, which lies to the east of Mount Athos ; then she doubled back to deposit us, her only passengers, at the Holy Mountain, and to take from it home to Odessa a hundred and fifty Russian pilgrims.

The old town of Kavalla, walled and crowned with a citadel, stands, like Monaco, upon a high promontory. It is connected with the new town (also of a respectable age), which is spread over the hills behind it, by a long two-storied aqueduct built in the middle ages by the Genoese. The great Mehmed 'Alî was a native of Kavalla, and, as a thank-offering for the favours which Allah had showered upon him, erected the large alms-house, which from the highest part of the old town looks across the Gulf of Kavalla to the well-timbered isle of Thasos. And the connexion between these two, between Thasos and the alms-house, is curious. In 1807 Mehmed 'Alî, having made his peace with Sultan

Mahmud II., received from him in perpetuity the revenues of Thasos (except the customs and the military exemption tax), to be applied to any charitable purpose which the Pasha of Egypt might select. He chose, naturally, his own foundation ; and from that time until 1902 the island was administered for the benefit of this establishment by an Egyptian *Mudir* of *Evqaf*,<sup>1</sup> although almost within swimming distance of the mainland of Turkey. In 1902 an attempt made by the Egyptian *Mudir* to increase certain dues provoked disturbances which led to the termination of the Egyptian administration ; and the island reverted to Turkey, at first as part of the vilayet of Salonika, later as a sanjaq or mutesarrifliq under the immediate jurisdiction of Constantinople.

It seemed a rich and goodly island as we coasted along its western shores towards Mount Athos. Indeed, in all directions the prospect was a pleasant one. Behind us, to the north, the snowy heights of Prnar Dagh towered above the coast line of Macedonia ; before us rose the peak of Athos, southernmost extremity of the peninsula to which it gives its name, a peak which from very early times has profoundly affected the imagination of navigators. Thus, some ancient seafarers have not hesitated to declare that at sunset its shadow covered the distant island of Lemnos, which we could just see away to the south-east. The peninsula of Mount Athos is itself a part of the greater peninsula of Chalcidice, the easternmost of its three narrow promontories of almost equal length. Kassandra and Longos are the other two, and over against Longos is the port of Mount Athos, the little harbour of Daphne. Here is the resi-

<sup>1</sup> Moslem ecclesiastical property and pious foundations.

dence of that luckless official, the Turkish Qaimaqam,<sup>1</sup> who, although representing the sovereign authority of the Sultan, is so entirely bound by the laws of the republic that he undertakes a monthly journey to Constantinople to visit his wife and children. The Sultan's authority over Mount Athos is as limited as was that of his predecessors, the Emperors of Byzantium, to whose piety many of the monasteries owe their existence. From its earliest days the monastic republic has enjoyed almost complete independence, and in return it pays to-day to the Porte an annual sum of £16,000, a sum not excessive in view of the fact that its total revenues amount to nearly half a million pounds. The Qaimaqam is the living symbol of Turkish suzerainty, but the local government of the peninsula is in the hands of the monks. They carry on the administration by means of two Councils, and maintain order through their Christian *sirdars*, stalwart Albanian soldiers whose uniform of white *fustanella* and scarlet jacket, crossed by heavy silver chains, is even more attractive than that of the royal *evzones* of Greece.

Let me endeavour briefly to describe the polity of this commonwealth of 7500 monks. The territory of the peninsula, which is forty miles long and about four miles in width, is divided entirely but unequally among twenty monasteries; and no one not a member or dependent of one of these, or a Turkish official, may permanently take up his residence in it. A little town called Karyaes is the capital and the seat of government; and here deliberate the 'Assembly' and the 'Commune'. The 'Assembly' is the legislative Council

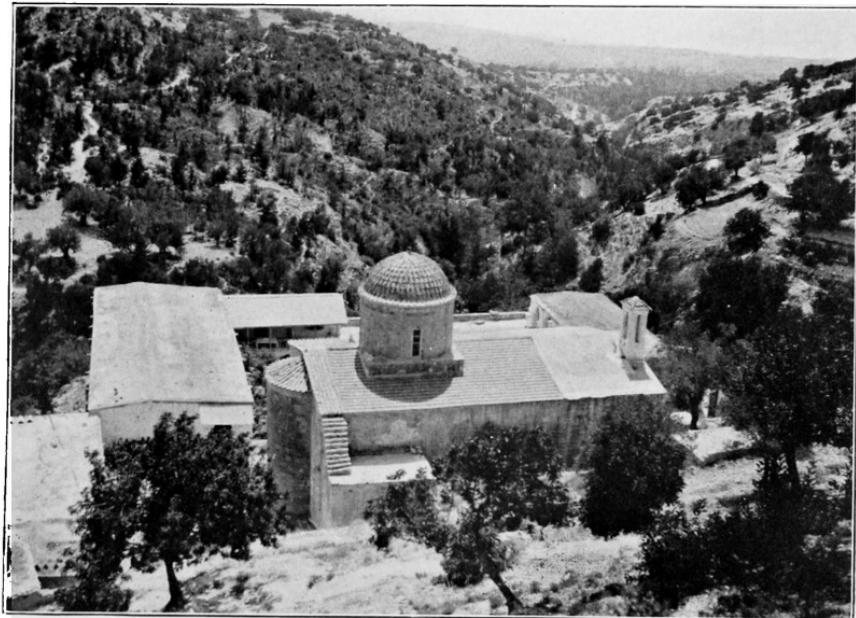
<sup>1</sup> I am describing the status of Mount Athos as it was at the time of my visit.

of the republic, and is composed of one deputy from each monastery, elected for one year; the 'Commune' is an inner or executive Council, and has a membership of four. These bodies decide matters of general concern; in other respects the monasteries manage their own affairs under the supervision, if coenobitic, of the abbot, or, if idiorhythmic, of a committee of overseers (*ἐπίτροποι*). For, while all Orthodox monks belong to the order of St. Basil, their monasteries are of two kinds. In coenobitic monasteries, which are ruled by abbots chosen for life, the monks own no property, take their meals in common, and generally conform to the earlier and stricter ideals of monasticism. The later and laxer principles of idiorhythmic rule, on the other hand, permit monks to live in their own suites of rooms, own private property, and have a share in the revenues and profits of their monastery. The idiorhythmic monastery is, in fact, a company owned by a limited number of shareholders, the monks, and administered by a board of directors, the *ἐπίτροποι*, whom the shareholders elect for a certain term of years. The monasteries of Mount Athos were in the first instance exclusively coenobitic. Then came a period of decadence, during which many lapsed into the idiorhythmic category; later, again, toward the end of the eighteenth century, the efforts of the Patriarch Gabriel resulted in a reformation whereby several backsliders returned to their former fold. Eleven of the monasteries are now coenobitic, nine idiorhythmic.

But the monks of Athos are not all dwellers in monasteries; and one of the most interesting features of the place is the co-existence in it at the present time of the three successive forms under which eastern



ABBOT WITH MONKS AND SERVITORS



A SMALL EASTERN MONASTERY



monasticism has existed. In a recent work Dr. Lake thus describes the periods in which these forms arose : “ There is first of all the hermit period, in which a desolate piece of country is selected by hermits as affording the necessary solitude for an ascetic life. Secondly, there is the period of loose organization of hermits in lauras ; that is to say, a collection of hermits’ cells, more or less widely scattered, grows up round the common centre provided by the cell of a hermit of remarkable fame, who has attracted, and in some degree become the leader of, the others. Thirdly, there comes a time when the loose organization of the laura is replaced by the stricter rule of a monastery, with definite buildings and fixed regulations, under the control of an *ηγούμενος* or abbot.”<sup>1</sup> The two earlier stages are now represented by a large number of *kellia* (hermitages) and *sketae* (groups of *kellia*), scattered throughout Mount Athos, wherein dwell those who prefer to lead more isolated and ascetic a life than that prevailing in the monasteries. *Kellia* and *sketae* nominally depend upon a monastery, although some *sketae* have now grown out of all proportion. A notable example is the Russian *skete* of St. Andrew, which is as big as two or three monasteries combined, and with its new green cupolas strikes a discordant note among the ancient Byzantine buildings of Karyaes.

Below this aggressively rich, somewhat vulgar, and most modern Russian outpost stands a venerable church called the Protaton, an impressive building lined with age-darkened frescoes, the mother-church of Mount Athos. The contrast between the two cannot fail to impress the observer : it is emblematic of the struggle

<sup>1</sup> *The Early Days of Monasticism on Mount Athos*, Oxford, 1909.

which, although carried on below the surface, is rending in twain the commonwealth of monks. The struggle is between the Russian and the Greek, the new and the old, the intruder and the occupant, the progressive and the conservative, and, it must in fairness be added, the vigorous and the feeble, the efficient and the effete, for the hegemony of Mount Athos. The Greeks claim and still possess to a considerable extent the leadership of the Orthodox Church as a whole; but their supremacy is being challenged, and challenged successfully. True, of the 20 Athonite monasteries, 17 are theirs, while Russians, Bulgarians, and Servians have only one each; consequently they command 17 votes in the Assembly to the three votes of the Slav element. Yet the true strength of the protagonists cannot be measured entirely by this standard: in their one monastery (with its *kellia* and *sketae*) the Russians can muster more monks than the Greeks in their seventeen. And hosts of Russian pilgrims, visiting the Holy Mountain at Christmas and at Easter, annually enrich the great Rossikon with recruits and with gifts of money; wealthy Russians frequently make bequests for the foundation of new *sketae*. They would gladly found new monasteries if they could; but the Patriarchs of Constantinople, anxious to save the Greeks from submersion, will not allow the number of twenty to be exceeded. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Rossikon, or, to give it its proper name, St. Panteleemon, was a Greek monastery; the Russians have now completely ousted the Greeks, and so enlarged the monastery that it was able to send a contingent of 300 monks to take part in the Russo-Japanese war. Servians and Bulgarians, too, follow the lead of Russia in this struggle, which is one

of Slav against Hellene; and when the Greeks, unable, as in the middle ages, to look to Byzantium for support, can no longer enforce representation by monastery, instead of by numbers, in the Athonite Assembly, their cause will have been lost.

We will now return to Daphne, where the Qaimaqam, Papayanni Bey, welcomed us with joy born of an utter surfeit of monks. After staying with him for two days, during which heavy snowstorms made it impossible to proceed, we set forth, and, accompanied by a zaptieh, rode up the bridle-path leading to Karyaes. It would be difficult to conceive of scenery more lovely than that in the mountainous forest country through which we passed. Olives, laurels, and holly-oaks on the lower levels, pine trees higher up, their boughs snow-laden, almost concealed from view the little *kellia* lurking everywhere among them; occasionally a clearing enabled us to look back and down upon Daphne, upon the tiled roofs of Xeropotamou, and, following the coastline of the peninsula northward, upon the grim white walls of Rossikon and over a succession of monasteries and *sketae* as far as the eye could reach. And when, having crossed the ridge which lengthwise divides Mount Athos, we came to the eastern slope, Karyaes with its towers and domes was before us, forest-embowered; and beyond it, past descending terraces of monasteries, the blue sea and Thasos.

Our first duty was to present our credentials to the Assembly. A *sirdar* led us to a house somewhat larger than the rest, up one flight of stairs and through an antechamber where stood several of his fellows, drew aside a black curtain embroidered with a cross in red, and ushered us into a large room round three sides of

which ran a divan. In the middle of the room stood a table, and at one end of the divan, facing the door, was a raised stall wherein sat impressively an old man with a long white beard, holding in his right hand an ivory-headed staff of office. This was the *Πρωτεπιστάτης*, the President of what is, I suppose, the strangest Parliament of Europe; at the table sat a younger monk, the clerk. To him we handed our letter, and after he had read it aloud, the President welcomed us with kindly words to Mount Athos. Meanwhile monastic legislators dropped in from time to time, in a casual fashion which showed that they were no strangers to parliamentary behaviour, and exchanged compliments with us while a palikar from outside carried in on a tray the usual oriental refreshments, coffee, jam, and liqueur. Presently we took our leave; and soon a messenger brought us the permit necessary for visiting the monasteries. It was in the form of an official letter addressed to the heads of the twenty establishments, requiring them to receive and entertain us; and it was sealed with the quadripartite seal of Mount Athos, of which one quarter is in the custody of each of the four members of the Commune, whence it can only be affixed in the presence of them all. The due formalities were thus complied with, and we were now made free of the republic.

The most important personage in the annals of the peninsula is St. Athanasius, called the Athonite, who flourished at the end of the tenth century. He it was who, with the support of his friend and patron, the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas, transformed Mount Athos from an unorganized resort of hermits into a regulated community. His monastery, the Great

Lavra, attracted monks from many parts; and he caused the fame of Athos to spread so widely that, before the century had closed, the monastery of Omor-phono had been founded in imitation of his by seven Benedictines from Amalfi. Of the brief history of the only Latin monastery in Mount Athos (it had dis-appeared before the beginning of the thirteenth century) we know little beyond the curious fact that its monks supplied St. Athanasius with caviare; but simultaneously with the Amalfitans there arrived from the Caucasus two distinguished nobles of Georgia, father and son, who founded the monastery of the Iberians or Georgians close by the eastern shore. Long ago, in the days of their strength, the Greeks drove out the Georgian monks; and Iveron (*μονὴ τῶν Ἰβηρῶν*) is now, next to Vatopedi, the largest of the Greek monasteries, with no trace of its origin except its name, an estate in the Caucasus, and some valuable Georgian manuscripts which Curzon vainly essayed to buy. We rode down to it from Karyaes, and, having tethered our mules outside in accordance with good manners, approached the gate on foot. The guest-master met us in the porch, where monks were selling crudely carved bone crosses and 'conversation beads,' and led us along interminable galleries to a clean and spacious room which was placed at our disposal. Iveron is idiorrhythmic, and houses its two hundred monks in suites of rooms not unlike those of an Oxford college. The only difference is that here a kitchen is attached to every suite; and thereby you may know the category of a monastery at a distance. If it is idiorrhythmic, a forest of chimneys breaks the long line of roofs; if, on the other hand, but few chimneys are seen, it is a sign

that the good monks still take their meals in the common refectory. Our guest-master was very zealous in doing the honours of his monastery, and through having lived for seven years in Georgia, managing some of its property, had become, for an Athonite monk, exceptionally alert and well-informed. It cannot, unfortunately, be denied that the interests of the monks of the present day are mean and paltry, and that the zeal and devotion which once made of Mount Athos the perfect image of religious life in the East, and a home of art and learning, are lamentably wanting. A few monks sit and think, the majority just sit, in the words of the fable ; and of the former the thoughts most probably follow some such trains as these : the latest elections in Greece (intriguers born and bred, they take an avid interest in the politics of the outer world) ; the fluctuations of a South African security in which they may be interested (for Greeks do not, in assuming the cassock, divest themselves of their taste for finance) ; the prospects of the ex-Patriarch So-and-so, now in retirement in, let us say, the monastery of Vatopedi, of ousting the man who has supplanted him ; and, above all, if they are Greeks, how they can score off their Russian rivals. Not very lofty subjects, perhaps, for the meditation of monks ; and, indeed, true spirituality seems to be entirely lacking in them. I only met one man in Mount Athos whom I would credit with it, and he was a layman, an old and wizened little Greek doctor who for many years had been resident physician at Iveron. On the morning after our arrival at the monastery, he took us, very early, to the principal church for the office of the community. It was dark without, and the

dimness within was intensified by the sombre frescoes on the walls, the flickering candle-light, and the incense which slowly rose to the dome in coils of fragrant smoke. The celebrants in their vestments, the congregation of monks standing in their stalls, had retained the dignified immobility, the mediaeval features and appearance of those Byzantine saints before whose stiff and lifeless images they stood in daily contemplation. The ones performed, the others followed the rites with a mechanical precision which their minds seemed to have no part in producing ; of all the faces around me, only that of the little doctor appeared to reflect anything of fervour or even of interest. No doubt the traditions of the Eastern Church, as preserved in Mount Athos, are apt to militate against individual thought and emotion ; it would seem to be their aim to cast their victims into an uniform hieratic mould, suppressing all promptings of the soul. Thus it happened that, in a monastery which cherished particular veneration for St. Nicephorus, a young monk showed talent for painting, and endeavoured to quicken his art by departing somewhat from the rigidity of the Byzantine style, a style which in the course of ages has been so entirely unaffected by change that it is often difficult to distinguish a fresco of the tenth century from one of the seventeenth. The Abbot chanced to see some of the boy's drawings, and administered a severe reprimand ; he subsequently explained to a protesting visitor that as the monk was destined all his life only to paint portraits of St. Nicephorus, it was obviously undesirable that he should waste his time in attempts to become an artist.

Portraits of St. Nicephorus, representing an emaciated

anchorite with a prodigious beard, recur frequently, too, among the frescoes of Iveron ; and the story of how this holy man came by his beard is perhaps worth transcribing from the aged tome in which I found it :

“ He was a person of the most eminent virtues of his time. But his great misfortune was that the endowments of his mind were not set off with the outward ornament of a beard. Upon occasion of which defect, he fell into a deep melancholy. The Devil taking the advantage of this Priest, promised to give him that boon which Nature had deny’d, in case he would comply with his suggestions. The beardless Saint, tho’ he was very desirous of the reward propos’d, yet he would not purchase it at that rate neither : but rejected the previous bribe with indignation, declaring resolutely, that he had rather for ever despair of his wish than obtain it upon such terms. And at the same time, taking in hand the downy tuft upon his chin, to witness the stability of his resolution (for he had it seems beard enough to swear by), Behold ! as a reward for his constancy, he found the hair immediately stretch, with the pluck that he gave it. Whereupon finding it in so good a humour, he follow’d the happy omen : and as young heirs that have been niggardly bred, generally turn prodigals when they come to their estates ; so he never desisted from pulling his beard, till he had wiredrawn it down to his feet.”

That night died in Iveron Neophytos, sometime Archbishop of Nevrekop in Macedonia, who had resigned his see to end his days as a simple monk in Athos. And on the morrow he was buried. Coped and mitred, and as rigid as any mummy in the folds of his stiff Byzantine vestments, he lay in an open coffin at the porch of the church, receiving the farewells of his





companions. Then, after the body had been asperged and censed, six sturdy monks carried the venerable Makarite (the pious Greeks allude to their dead as ‘blessed’) out of the monastery gate for the last time, to the little cemetery which lies on a neighbouring knoll rising gently above the sea. Here, still in his open coffin, he was laid to rest, while the bells of the churches were tolled and the *semantra* (gongs) beaten, facing that stormy diocese across the Gulf whose conflicts had driven him long ago to seek peace in the monastery of the Georgians. In the afternoon we said good-bye to our kindly hosts of Iveron, and, as we departed, the little doctor, whose beard was almost as long as that of St. Nicephorus himself, bade us farewell in archaic French, which he must have learned from the classics of the eighteenth century. We now rode northward along the shore to two monasteries, Stavroniketa and Pantocrator, which rise fantastically from the water’s very edge, their upper galleries actually overhanging the sea. Here were mosaics and jewelled icons in abundance, and in Pantocrator some priceless Rhodian plates let into the walls. But it would be impossible to describe all the monasteries in detail within the limits of a chapter designed to give but a general summary of their nature. Enough, I trust, has been said to show that in the diversity which it offers, the study of the monasteries of the Levant is of absorbing interest. If we look beneath the outer garb of mediaevalism, which is common to them all, we discern in some the eremitical asceticism of the early Church and complete aloofness from the world; in others the keenest interest, the most active participation in all that is going on. In Hagia Roxane a solitary hermit is ending his days with fasting and meditation;

in Rossikon two thousand eager partisans are fighting for the supremacy of their nation in a monastic republic. In St. Luke in Stiris a small community is peacefully cultivating its fields; in Vatopedi monks are dabbling in De Beers, and ex-Patriarchs scheming for their restoration. Some monasteries you can approach only if you are an athlete, others only if you are a male. At one time you seem to be removed by centuries from the age in which you live; suddenly you will be brought back to it by discovering in a mediaeval monk modern traits which were not expected. And if the desire to give a faithful account of eastern monasteries has made it necessary to mention certain imperfections, certain deviations from the standard set by religious communities in the West, no less stress should be laid upon the hospitality of the monks and upon their friendliness to strangers. The kindly welcome which they never fail to extend does much to mitigate the discomfort entailed by a visit to their strange abodes.

## CHAPTER II.

### RHODES.

To leave the Holy Mountain, we retraced our steps past Karyaes to its only port, Daphne, and there received a hearty send-off from the genial Papayanni. Communication between Athos and the outside world is neither frequent nor good; so we had perforce to be content with a cattle-ship, which, fourteen hours after our departure from Daphne, set us down at Chanaq Qal'esi, at the Asiatic entrance to the Dardanelles. They were fourteen hours heavy with discomfort. It was bitterly cold, a gale was blowing, and our cargo of sheep not only filled both decks, but overflowed into the saloon, to encounter the stony gaze of the icon of St. Nicholas, which in all Greek and Russian ships presides over that apartment. As we skirted the south coast of Imbros, rain swept down in torrents, and when again we got into open sea the gale had become a storm. Finally, we made the Dardanelles, but, arriving too late to be given pratique, were compelled to spend another night on board.

Early the next morning, we transferred ourselves and baggage on shore; and, after satisfying a bevy of functionaries on the wharf that our *tezkerés* were all that they should be, determined to set out in search of

such shipping agents as Chanaq Qal'esi might boast of, anxious to prosecute without delay the journey to our next objective, Rhodes. But there was no need for us to trouble; Mohammed was already hastening to the mountain. Like wildfire the news of our arrival and destination had spread among those citizens of Chanaq who had an eye to business (and they, I think, are equivalent to the entire population, which, as in other Turkish ports, consists very largely of Jews), and hardly had we installed ourselves in a coffee-shop to prepare for the morning's work, when by each of the doors of the establishment there entered, simultaneously, the agent of a steamship company. And then the fun began. With no unseemly haste, with that true oriental courtesy which can so well disguise sentiments of a very different nature, these two men of enterprise took it in turns to sit at our table, pass the time of day, and, without quite knowing what price the other had suggested, to underbid him in the matter of our fares. One was a dapper little Jew, of Russian origin, born in Constantinople, and living under the protection of a British passport. This much he vouchsafed in the preliminaries to actual business. The other was a lanky, fire-eating Greek, with caroty hair and a fierce moustache, a plausible manner and a shifty eye. They had heard, they said, that we wanted to go to Rhodes. By a providential coincidence each had a boat leaving that very day for Rhodes, *via* Smyrna, and would esteem it an honour, as well as an unexpected piece of good fortune, to be allowed to convey us thither.

Now in the course of another journey, some four years previously, I had spent a few days in Smyrna, and had even sampled a portion of the Aidin railway;

but agreeable as was the former, and charming the country traversed by the latter, with its plains of waving asphodel and its stork-inhabited ruins, I was anxious on the present occasion to hasten to pastures new. This aspect of the situation was carefully explained; and both gentlemen assured us, separately and in turn, that their ships would stop at Smyrna for two hours at the utmost, and would then make with all despatch for Rhodes. Much time was now spent, and much coffee consumed, while the subject of fares was again discussed in all its bearings. To each agent with sublime impartiality we lauded his rival's ship, and this, I think, with considerable success; but bed-rock was touched when the Russian, who had the bigger boat, declared that he could go no lower than 90 francs a head, while the Greek was prepared, nay eager, to do the job for 65. And well he might. Won by the plausible manner, and in spite of the shifty eye, we took our passages with him, and, the business of the day being concluded, spent the remainder of the morning in the company of a fat Jew, in theory being shown the sights of the town, in practice having to listen to a detailed narrative of his friendship with the late Professor Schliemann, and of their joint labours at Troy.

We left Chanaq in the afternoon, and all unsuspecting steamed past Tenedos's double peak and watched the sun set behind vine-clad Mitylene. But on the morrow a rude awakening was ours. As we moved along the hilly shores between which the Gulf of Smyrna eats its way for thirty miles into the land, the captain informed us, with an *aplomb* which we could but admire, that his next port of call after Smyrna would be the Piraeus, and that Rhodes never had been, and

was never likely to be, included in his itinerary. Too amazed at the effrontery of our carroty friend at Chanaq to make, there and then, a suitable and effective protest, we landed at Smyrna like lambs ; but at the custom-house a successful brush with the censor, who interrupted the suppression of a telegram announcing that Montenegro had broken off relations with the Vatican in order to point out the iniquity of importing into Turkey so seditious a work as a treatise on Crusading castles, enabled us to recover sufficiently to make a perfectly useless scene at the company's offices. By the time we had finished, the Russian ship arrived ; and nothing now remained but the somewhat humiliating task of negotiating with her once more, and, our overtures being received without undue display of triumph, to embark in her the same evening, the poorer in gold, the richer in experience.

It is refreshing to turn from the contemplation of brigandage so base to the more attractive<sup>1</sup> form practised in the neighbourhood of Smyrna by the spirited Chakirji<sup>2</sup> and his numerous confrères, among whom the luckless Captain Andreas is almost unique in having been caught and punished by the Government. The vilayet of Aidin has long been a flourishing centre of brigandage, and there was a time, not many years ago, when the Vali was compelled to restrict play on the golf course in the environs of Smyrna to two days a week, as he could not spare more often the patrol of zaptiehs required to protect members of the club from capture. The leaders of the brigand profession take a

<sup>1</sup> It seems more attractive because others are the victims.

<sup>2</sup> The death of Chakirji, or Chakirji 'Ali, was last reported by the Turkish press in November, 1911.



CAPTAIN ANDREAS WITH HIS CAPTORS



RHODES, THE STREET OF THE KNIGHTS



by no means undistinguished place in such Smyrniot society as is not strictly official and does not contribute victims. It must be borne in mind that in the East brigandage is essentially a gentleman's occupation, and is held by many in honour and repute. This is, indeed, not unnatural in countries where the impulse to embrace it is not always an exclusively sordid one ; it is often in part political, as with the Klephts, or sentimental, as in the case of Chakirji, and thus certain to evoke sympathy and to command popular approbation. Chakirji, for example, was the son of a poor cultivator of olives, and saw his father shot before his eyes because he could not or would not satisfy the demands of the tax-farmer's emissary. Determined to avenge his father's death on the Government, on whom he visited, not quite justly, perhaps, the tax-farmer's crime, he became a brigand whose speciality was the capture of Turkish officials, and when these were unable to produce the requisite ransom, they were summarily shot. In Turkey such proceedings used to be by no means incompatible either with society manners or, owing to the amenability of the Bench to certain forms of persuasion, with personal liberty; and Chakirji, who spoke English, went to tea-parties at Burnabat and Budjah, and is even believed to have played tennis in the city of Smyrna itself. The contrast suggested by so widely differing aspects of the man's existence may seem to us a strange one, but examples of it are not as rare as one might think. I knew a gentleman on the West Coast of Africa who had been tried on two occasions for complicity in Human Leopard Society murders, a peculiarly atrocious combination of cannibalism and magic; and who nevertheless paid annual visits to England, where he wore a silk hat and a frock coat and

belonged, I believe, to a club ; and who, when residing in his native village, read prayers every morning to his assembled families. I do not wish to imply for a moment that brigandage and cannibalism are morally on the same level. Regarded from a social point of view, however, the latter practice is far from being *mal vué* in the tribe of which the individual in question is a member; and although I am bound to state that he was acquitted of the charges brought against him, whereas Chakirji took a proper pride in his profession, nay, regarded each *coup* as an act of filial piety, the fact that he lived at times in an environment which made his prosecution for Human Leopardism possible, while at others he could be seen, immaculately dressed, in the streets of Liverpool or London, makes the analogy a valid one.

Our new vessel was a pilgrim ship conveying a batch of moujiks from Odessa to the Holy Land, and throughout the following day, and doubtless during every day of their journey, these stolid, simple, faithful folk sat in the steerage, singing hymns in harmony and doing kind actions to each other's heads, otherwise impassive and quite oblivious of the ever-changing scenery through which we were threading our way. It was a charming maze of capes and small islands, full of unexpected developments, and full of memories of modern history's most romantic period. For, in passing between Kalymnos and the Carian shore, we entered the whilom dominions of the great Order which has left an indelible mark on this corner of the world, that Order whose members, variously known as Hospitallers, Knights of St. John, Knights of Rhodes, and Knights of Malta, after continuing the struggle which had been abandoned by the Crusaders, and after keeping back for genera-

tions the flowing tide of Islam, slowly and reluctantly receded westward, until, having lost everything except a sovereignty little more than nominal, they now spend a placid and enfeebled old age under their Grandmaster in Rome, contemplating an irretrievable past when they were both the pride and the glory of Europe. Kalymnos was theirs, a dependency of Rhodes; theirs, too, the castle of Budrun which they constructed of the tomb of Mausolus, and which we could see, gleaming in the sunlight, on the promontory of Halicarnassus. Then came Pserimo and Kos, Nisyros and Syme (*un ottimo Pascolo di Capre*, says Coronelli), and late at night, its ramparts outlined against the starry sky, Rhodes itself, Rhodes, last citadel of militant Christendom in the East, Rhodes whose defence against the Turks was as much the wonder of the world as had ever been its Colossus.

The Rhodes of these days, unchanged except in its possessors from the Rhodes of those, recalls with startling vividness the era of the Knights. Its fortifications, one of the noblest monuments which mediaeval military art has ever produced, certainly the best preserved, the most extensive of all that survive, enclose what has been said to be the most perfect specimen extant of a fifteenth century French town, complete in every detail. Elsewhere may be seen, as at Avila and Aigues Mortes, massive town-walls, or, as in Oxford, a street largely mediaeval; but nowhere can be matched this stupendous cincture of curtain, gate, and tower, setting a town which for close on four centuries has suffered no alteration, a town of Gothic houses whose turrets and mullions, gargoyles and emblazoned façades, are the fine flower of flamboyant domestic architecture. And yet here is something

more than an unrivalled combination of western art, military and domestic, surviving the ages in almost unrivalled perfection. Here are a sea and sky of Mediterranean blue, a golden-brown colour to the walls which is sometimes seen in Sicilian buildings but never in those of France, a scattering of date-palms through the open spaces of the Burgh and through the pretty suburbs behind it, and the picturesquely varied population of a Turkish town, all helping to create the unique and manifold charm possessed by the remnants of the Latin East. As salt brings out the flavour of meat, so does colour reveal the full beauty of a building ; and Rhodes can prove, as the most fastidious purist will allow, that the Gothic church and the Gothic mansion, which are admirable in the cold lights of Northern France or England, are transformed into something far more wonderful in the golden haze of the Archipelago.

The prettiest sight in Rhodes is its harbour, facing Makri on the Karamanian coast, once also a stronghold of the Order. Two moles run out from the land, the one forming the outer boundary of the Grand Harbour, the other separating it on its northern side from the Mandraki, a subsidiary harbour used by the Knights for their lesser galleys. Along both moles is planted a row of the windmills which are one of the most characteristic features of the island, the very windmills which ground the corn in the days of the Order ; and both terminate in strongly fortified watch-towers, the northern one in St. Nicholas's Tower, perhaps the site of the Colossus, the eastern one in the Tower of the Windmills. At the base of St. Nicholas's mole a shorter spit, running at right angles to it, partially closes the entrance of the Grand Harbour ; here in

former days stood Naillac's Tower, once the greatest of all the towers of Rhodes, but now surviving only in its foundations. Between this spot and the base of the mole of the Windmills' Tower the walls of Castile line the Grand Harbour with a semicircle of solid masonry, and there are few more delightful walks in the fortress than along the road which runs between these and the water's edge. To your right, as you enter the road from the Sea Gate, stretches the crenellated crescent of stone, guarding the town which lies behind it, and broken in the middle by the towers of St. Katharine's Gate ; to your left its outlines are reflected in the still waters of the harbour, which looks as if at any moment it might once again be filled with the galleys of the Knights, gaily decked for a water pageant, or else mustering for some raid on which the banner of the Order, on a field gules a plain cross argent, would be borne victorious against the Turks. But as Rhodes was rarely attacked from the sea side, the walls of the harbour, if the more picturesque, were inferior in strategical importance to those which defended the land side of the town ; hence they were entrusted to the care of the smallest of the eight Nations or 'Langues' of which the Order was composed during its occupation of the island. These were, in order of precedence, the Langues of Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, England, Germany, and Castile, and to each Langue was committed the defence of a certain section of the fortifications. At Naillac's Tower begin the walls of France, and then follow, in succession and completing the circuit, those of Germany, Auvergne, Aragon, England, Provence, and lastly, those of Italy, which end at the mole of the Windmills, where those of

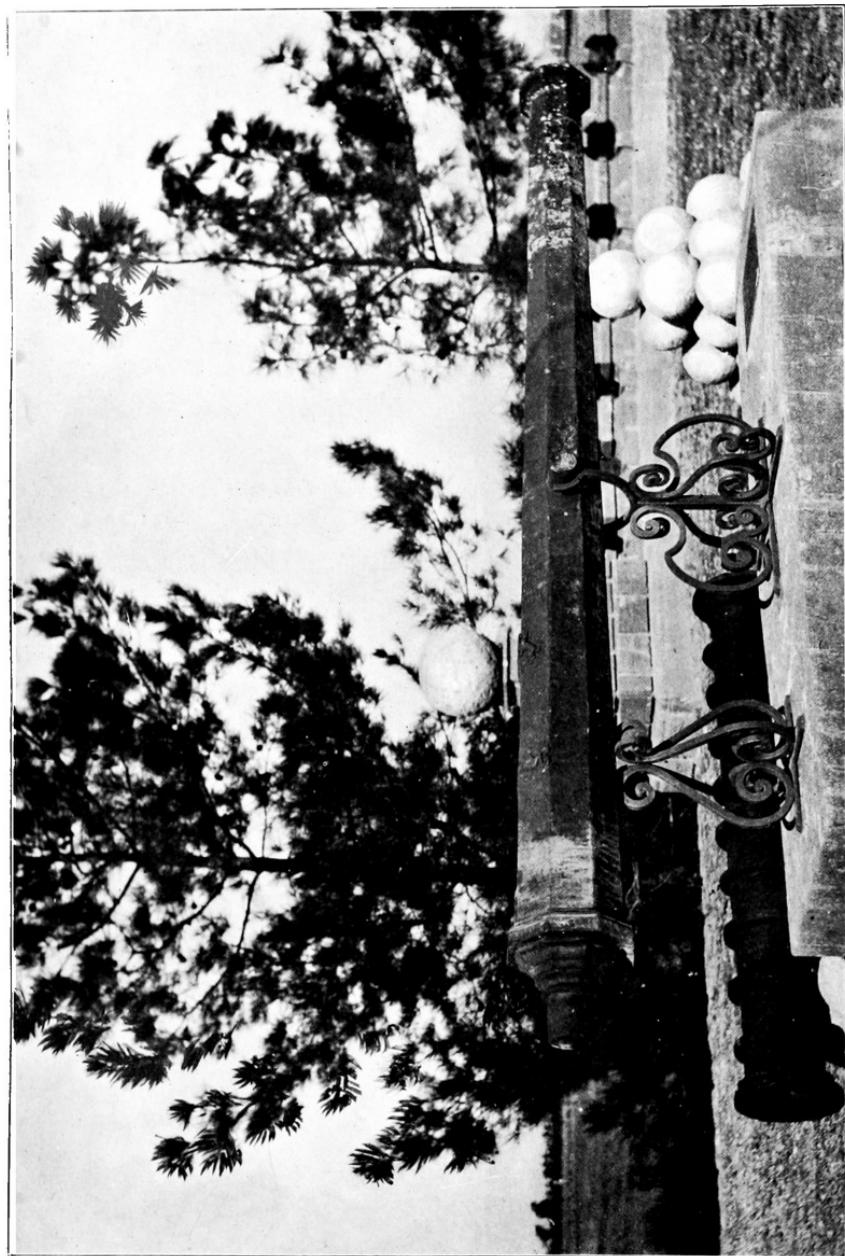
Castile begin. On the land side three gates, the Gates of Amboise, St. George, and St. John, give issue from the city by bridges which cross the wide ditch cut with incalculable labour in the rock along the whole length of the defences ; but for these there is no interruption to the chain of wall and bastion. A fourth gate, that of St. Athanasius, was closed after the siege of 1480 by Cardinal d'Aubusson, fifteenth of the Rhodian Grand-masters.

The city itself consists of two parts : the smaller, known as the Collachium, contained the principal buildings of the Order, the Hospital, the conventional Church, the Grandmaster's palace, and the *Auberges* of the several Langues ; and the Knights, who lived a collegiate life, were compelled by the rules of the Order to dwell within it. Separated by a wall from the Collachium was the Burgh, inhabited by the merchants and by the subjects of the Order. But after the Turkish conquest all foreigners except Jews were expelled from both Burgh and Collachium, and to the time of our visit only Turks and Jews could live in the city. Thus, when the bugles blew at sunset, and the Turkish sentries closed the gates with as much precision as if Rhodes were still being beleaguered, all *rayahs* and strangers perforce withdrew and returned to their dwellings outside the walls, in the suburbs of Neomara and Mara. The Jews were privileged, it is said, because one of their faith, resident in the town during its final siege by the Turks, is supposed to have aided in his betrayal Andrea d'Amaral, then 'Pillar,' or Head, of the Langue of Castile, and *ex officio* Grand Chancellor of the Order. On the death of Grandmaster del Carretto in 1521, d'Amaral was a candidate for the

Grandmagistracy ; but the Order chose Villiers de l'Isle Adam, and in the following year Suleyman the Magnificent began the investment of the town, determined at last to make an end of the power which had been for so long a thorn in the side of the Ottoman Empire. Previous attempts had taught the Turks that this would be no easy matter, and they had brought an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men to take the town, which was being defended by six hundred Knights, four thousand five hundred mercenaries, and the Greek inhabitants, who, preferring even the Latins to the Turks, displayed throughout the greatest loyalty to the Order. For several months the siege continued. Despite great efforts and heavy loss of life on the part of the Turks, the city held out, and the Knights, led by their heroic Grandmaster, determined to sell Rhodes dearly. But the well-placed artillery of the besiegers gradually reduced the numbers of the garrison, and time diminished their supplies. On the 24th of September the Turks succeeded, after several vain assaults, in making a breach in the walls of Aragon, but after holding the wall for three hours they were obliged to retire, and they lost on that day no fewer than 15,000 men. At this stage it is said that the Sultan, deceived by their untiring resistance as to the extent of the Knights' resources, was so discouraged that he contemplated raising the siege, when d'Amaral, embittered by his disappointment and jealous of l'Isle Adam, revealed to him, by messages shot on arrows into the Turkish lines, the terrible straits of the besieged. At least, such was the evidence given against him by his valet and by a Greek priest, and on it he was condemned and executed by a desperate garrison

which could afford to take no risks. After that, there was no more hope, yet the nearer appeared the triumph of the Turks, the more spirited became the resistance. On the 10th of October the Turks seized the bastion of Aragon, but with a mighty effort the defenders hastily threw up a new wall behind the now conquered fort ; on the 29th of November, while the bells of St. John's Church pealed and the Greek Archbishop urged his people to the walls, a last rally of soldiers and citizens, men and women, kept off for a few more days the inevitable fall. On the 22nd of December the agony was at an end ; l'Isle Adam surrendered, and Suleyman rode into the city over the bodies of the forty thousand Turks who had been its price. "Toutefois," remarks Friar André Thevet in a pleasant work intituled *Cosmographie de Levant*, " il usa d'une grande modestie envers le Seigneur Grandmaistre & envers tous les habitans du lieu, les laissant aller bagues sauves, avec inhibicions & defenses à ses gens de ne leur faire aucun empesche ny deplaisir." On the 1st of January, 1523, the galleys of the Order assembled for the last time in the harbour to which they had so often returned laden with Turkish booty : the Grandmaster, with those who remained of the Knights, and with some five thousand of the inhabitants, embarked and sailed away ; and thus, with the honours of war, departed out of Rhodes the Order which had done much in the name of religion that would scarce do religion credit, but which had won, by gallantry that atoned for not a little, the admiration of Christians and the respect of the Turks.

In 1856 the conventual Church of St. John, which stood in the Collachium, near the Grandmaster's palace,



ONE OF THE 19 CANNON PRESENTED BY HENRY VIII. TO L'ISLE ADAM FOR THE RECAPTURE OF RHODES ; FOUND IN FAMAGUSTA HARBOUR, AND NOW AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, NICOSIA



was struck by lightning. A terrific explosion ensued, in which the church and its adjoining buildings were annihilated, and more than eight hundred people killed. The lightning had ignited a quantity of gunpowder which lay in the vaults of the church, its presence unknown until revealed by the disaster. The question as to the origin of the gunpowder has never yet been solved, although many theories have been put forward. The Rhodians believe, however, that it was hidden there by none other than d'Amaral, who, not content with betraying his fellow Knights to the Sultan, endeavoured still further to cripple their resources by concealing their ammunition. Whether this suspicion is true or not will probably never be proved; but it is not impossible that news of a shortage of powder had reached d'Amaral's judges when they ordered him to be beheaded and quartered, and a portion of his body to be exposed on every bastion.

As the greatness of Portugal in former days was due to a succession of able kings, so the Order owed to its Grandmasters much of its undoubted success. The names of Hélion de Villeneuve, Dieudonné de Gozon, '*extinctor draconis*,' Philibert de Naillac, Pierre Cardinal d'Aubusson, Emery d'Amboise, and Philippe Villiers de l'Isle Adam are pre-eminent among those of many other famous men who ruled in Rhodes; and to this day shields of marble, bearing their arms beside those of the Order, may be seen in many places on the walls which they raised to protect it. Their arms, and those of others, likewise adorn the façades of the Auberges in the Street of the Knights, except where they have been displaced by the overhanging balconies of lattice work which the Turks call *shahnishin*, 'the place for the king'

to sit.' Yet, however much the addition of these may be deplored by the visitor, he has no right to blame the poor Turks who now own houses where once dwelt the chivalry of Europe for adapting them as far as possible to their requirements. Unlike Napoleon's troops in the Peninsula, the Turks are no vandals; they rarely, if ever, destroy for the sake of destruction only, and to this fact we owe the survival of many a splendid basilica, of many a priceless mosaic. Possibly they do not consider it worth the trouble. But they certainly do not understand the spirit in which western races regard works of art, nor have they themselves any appreciation of them. They only consider the practical aspect of the question; and if the defacement or the preservation of some ancient building adds in any way to their convenience, they do not hesitate either to deface or to preserve. Otherwise, they merely leave it alone; wondering mildly at the fascination which the *antika* exercises over the stranger.

Nevertheless, there have flourished in Rhodes two arts, although now they flourish no longer. The embroideries with which the peasantry of the island adorned their skirts, their curtains, and their bedspreads are among the most attractive of those to be met with in the Aegean, where nearly every island produced embroideries, each of a characteristic type. The pattern of the Rhodian work is most original: it consists of lozenges of the richest colour, alternately red and bluish green, bordering and in rows upon a *fond* of homely cotton. The rural population of Rhodes is predominantly Greek, as in all the Archipelago, so that no credit can on this account be given to the Turks; at Lindos, however, in the south-east part of the island,

where a lofty castle and well-preserved Gothic houses remain of the time of the Knights, was made much of the beautiful class of Turkish pottery commonly known as Rhodian. Tradition ascribes the origin of the Lindos kilns, some of which may still be seen, to the capture by the galleys of the Order, in the course of one of their raids, of a large Turkish ship, having on board some Persian or Damascene potters. Wishing to utilize the skill of their prisoners, the Knights established them at Lindos, where the sand was particularly suitable for glazing; and there the potters and their successors continued under the Turkish domination.

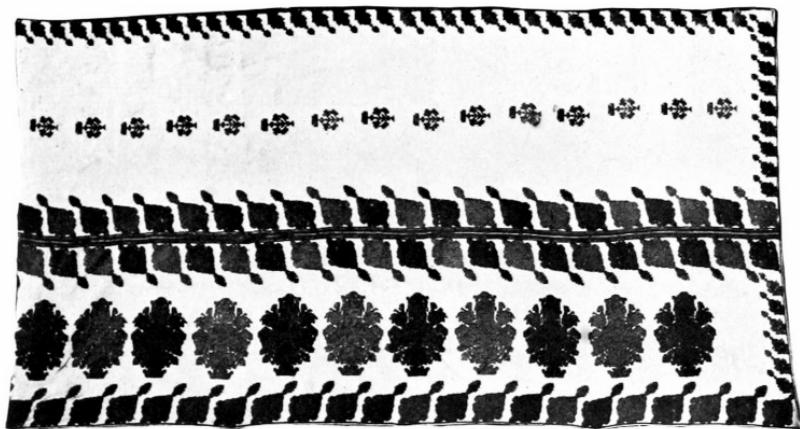
The most noticeable characteristic of Rhodian pottery is a peculiar red pigment, coralline in colour and prepared from the red oxide of iron, which is applied so thickly as to stand out in relief. Its designs are mainly the favourite flowers of the Turks, roses, carnations, hyacinths, and tulips, interlacing on a ground of faint and running green; and so much favour did it find in Europe that although from the sixteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth century there was a goodly output from Lindos of tiles, jugs, and dishes, the island is now all but denuded of specimens of its ware. Only in the Mosque of Rejeb Pasha, also called the Eski-Yeni Jami' or Old-New Mosque, are there eight panels of perfect tiles, jealously guarded by its Imâms; and the collector will seek for them in vain among the *antikajis* of Rhodes.

The climate of Rhodes is delightful, its vegetation rich and pleasant; and for this reason, no doubt, a kindly Government was wont to select it as the place of banishment for that type of exile which seems to be peculiar to the Ottoman and Celestial Empires, for the

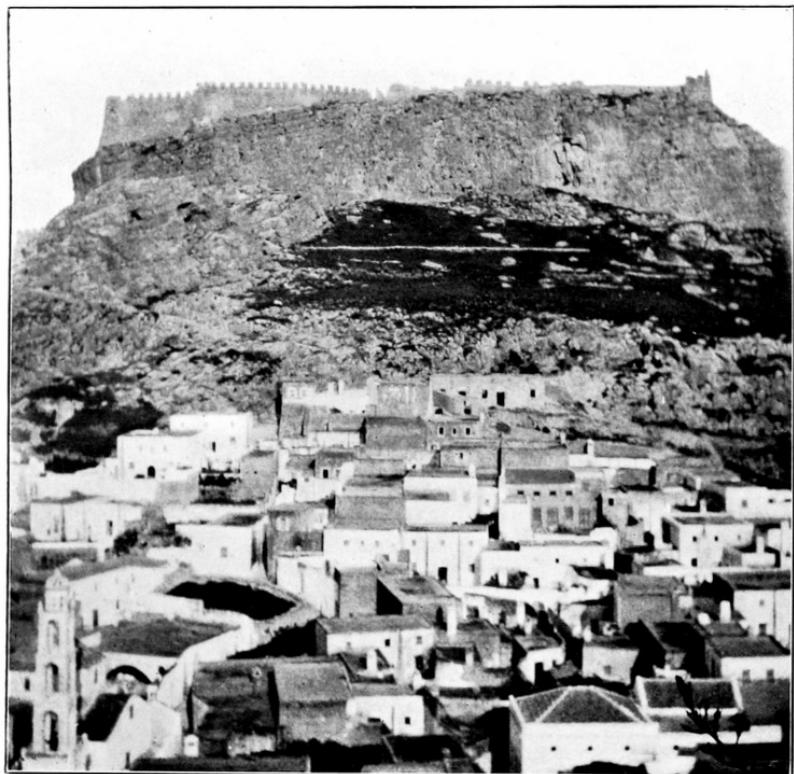
individual who has temporarily incurred its displeasure, but who by a subsequent turn of fortune will probably be restored to favour. The town simply teemed with these interesting and not altogether unfortunate people. There was a host of ample Pashas whose friends at headquarters were for the moment out of office, an Armenian doctor who had failed to cure an Imperial Prince, and a mysterious Sheikh from the Yemen who excited much attention owing to the fact that, in the manner of certain Persians, he dyed his beard a brilliant scarlet. Even the Vali (Rhodes is the capital of the vilayet of the Archipelago) was in dignified exile, as will be related anon. In former times the Governorship of the Archipelago was held *ex officio* by the Qapitan Pasha,<sup>1</sup> the Admiralissimo of Turkey, and Rhodes was still, at the time of our visit, a naval station of considerable importance on paper. But the Admiral Commanding was more renowned as an equestrian than as a seaman, nor would his fleet, had it ever gone to

<sup>1</sup> While on the subject of the Qapitan Pasha, I cannot refrain from quoting that prudent traveller Henry Blount, who in the course of a journey into the Levant touched at Rhodes in 1634 :

“ Upon my first landing (at Rhodes) I had espied among divers very honourable Sepultures, one more brave than the rest, and new ; I enquired whose it was ; a Turke not knowing whence I was, told me it was the *Captaine Basha*, slaine the yeare before by two *English Ships*; and therewith gave such a Language of our *Nation*, and threatening to all whom they should light upon, as made me upon all demands professe my selfe a *Scotchman*, which being a name unknowne to them, saved mee, nor did I suppose it any quitting of my Countrey, but rather a *retreat* from one corner to the other ; and when they required more in particular, I intending my owne *sajetie* more than their *instruction*, answered the truth both of my *King*, and *Country*, but in the ould *Greeke*, and *Latine* titles, which was as darke to them as a discourse of *Isis*, and *Osyris*



A BEDSPREAD OF RHODIAN EMBROIDERY IN THE AUTHOR'S POSSESSION



LINDOS AND ITS CASTLE



sea, have afforded him much opportunity of testing its or his own capacity. I forbear to describe his ships lest someone, confronting me with a Turkish Navy List, call me a liar ; but those who knew Turkey and its navy under the old *régime* will agree that in the realm of romance that work has rarely been surpassed.

Many are the tales which are told of the Turkish navy in its unregenerate days.

An Ottoman man of war was once ordered at very short notice to demonstrate against certain insurgents.

“ Start in half an hour,” said someone at the Ministry of Marine to the Commander.

“ Pardon, Excellency, we cannot.”

“ Fellow, why not ?”

“ Excellency, there is no rudder.”

“ Imbecile, start at once ; the rudder shall be sent on by post.”

A Turkish Admiral ordered his squadron to go for a cruise.

“ Where to ?” his officers inquired.

“ There seems to be plenty of room,” replied the Admiral, glancing at the chart ; “ let us go straight ahead.”

They did, and the fleet ran ashore on the north coast of Africa.

Many years ago, before her engines had been sold by her Commander, the gunboat at Rhodes was performing some evolutions in the harbour, when the steering gear developed a defect, and the vessel made straight for the mole. The order was given to reverse engines ; but the chief engineer called up laconically : ‘ *makina qizdi*,’ a delightful phrase somewhat difficult to translate, which meant that the engines had got excited and angry,

and would not agree to stop. So she ran on to the mole, whence she was hauled off by the delighted population.

A new Admiral was appointed to the command of the Mediterranean squadron. He was rowed off to his flagship, and installed himself in the Admiral's quarters which opened on to the sternwalk.

The next morning he awoke and said,  
“Full speed ahead, by Allah !”

So presently the propeller began to revolve, and as it had not moved since the ship was sold to the Turks, at more than cost price, by a Power which had no further use for her, it made a fearful din.

“Allah!” cried the Admiral, “what in the name of the Prophet is this uproar ?”

“The propeller, O Excellency.”

“Stop it, then.”

“But the ship will stop, O Excellency.”

“Then take the damned thing off,” bellowed the Admiral, “and put it on the other end.”

The day before we left Rhodes, the Greeks celebrated their New Year's Eve. Little bands of children perambulated the Greek *faubourgs*, singing carols outside the houses, and receiving in return gifts of money or of food. Were any of them aware, I wonder, as they did so, how closely they were following in the footsteps of their Dorian ancestors ? In ancient times it was the custom in Rhodes, at the approach of spring, for boys to carry a swallow from house to house, singing :

ἢλθ', ἢλθε χελιδῶν  
καλὰς ὄρας ἄγουσα,  
καλοὺς ἐνιαυτούς,  
ἐπὶ γαστέρα λευκά,  
ἐπὶ νῶτα μέλαινα.

The swallow's come, winging  
 His way to us here !  
 Fair hours is he bringing,  
 And a happy new year !  
 White and black  
 Are his belly and back.

Then came the request :

*παλάθαν σὺ προκύκλει  
 ἐκ πίονος οἴκου  
 οἴνου τε δέπαστρον  
 τυροῦ τε κάνυστρον·  
 καὶ πύρνα  
 χελιδῶν καὶ λεκιθίταν  
 οὐκ ἀπωθεῖται. πότερ' ἀπίωμες η̄ λαβώμεθα;  
 εἰ μέν τι δώσεις.*

Give him welcome once more,  
 With figs from your store,  
 With wine in its flasket,  
 And cheese in its basket,  
 And eggs,—ay, and wheat if we ask it.  
 Shall we go or receive ? yes, we'll go if you'll give ;

but if the master of the house was close-fisted,

*εἰ δὲ μή, οὐκ ἔάστομεν,  
 η̄ τὰν θύραν φέρωμες η̄ θούπέρθυρον  
 η̄ τὰν γυναικα τὰν ἔσω καθημέναν·  
 μικρὰ μέν ἔστι, ῥᾳδίως νυν οἴσομες.*

But, if you refuse us, we never will leave.  
 We'll tear up the door,  
 And the lintel and floor ;  
 And your wife, if you still demur—  
 She is little and light—we will come to-night  
 And run away e'en with her.

If, however, he gave freely,

*ἄν δὴ φέρῃς τι,  
 μέγα δή τι φέροιο.*

But if you will grant  
 The presents we want,  
 Great good shall come of it,  
 And plenty of profit !

So,

*ἀνοιγ' ἀνοιγε τὰν θύραν χελιδόνι·  
 οὐ γὰρ γέροντές ἔσμεν, ἀλλὰ παιδία.*

Come, throw open free  
 Your doors to the swallow !  
 Your children are we,  
 Not old beggars, who follow.<sup>1</sup>

In such things the world has changed but little, and the same feast often appears in a variety of guises. The children who sang carols in honour of the Orthodox New Year obeyed the same impulse as did the little rascals with the swallow; the announcement was followed by the same rejoicings, doubtless, then as now. New Year's Day at Rhodes was a day of piety and conviviality. In the morning everyone went to church, attired in their best; after mass, they repaired home to prolonged family banquets. Suddenly, at half past two in the afternoon, the ancient cannon on the ramparts boomed. It was ten days to the minute since the new moon had been discerned in the sky, and the Turkish gunners who had been standing by, watch in hand, announced with a salute the advent of Qurban Bairam. The two feasts fell together, and the Turks, no less than the Christians, prepared due celebrations; every Turkish household killed a sheep, whose fleece had been dyed vermillion, in remembrance of Abraham's uncompleted sacrifice.

<sup>1</sup> The song is quoted in Athenaeus, viii., 60, and has been charmingly set to music by A. M. Goodhart. I have borrowed the translation of E. B. C.

At night, as we steamed out of the harbour and looked back at the town, we beheld a sight of unwonted loveliness. The domes of the mosques and the balconies of the minarets were garlanded with rows of little lamps, and their concentric circles of light revealed the outlines of the buildings with enchanting and fitful glimmer. In every quarter their flickering gleam shone faintly out of the darkness, and even so the crescent moon illumined, living emblem of its masters, the defences of the citadel. As the ship moved onward, windmills, towers, and cupolas, vaguely suggested, passed slowly out of sight, and the last view we had of them was perhaps the most beautiful of all. Not in the broad light of day, but in fairy-like obscurity, *per speculum in aenigmate*, did we bid farewell to the mighty fortress, to

“ Rhodes, des Ottomans ce redoutable écueil,  
De tous ses défenseurs devenu le cerceuil.”

## CHAPTER III.

### CYPRUS.

FROM Rhodes, the inheritor of the military traditions of the Crusades, we proceeded by devious stages to Cyprus, successor to their commercial heritage. First we touched at Mersina, a town full of Armenians, full of camels, and surrounded by ruined castles ; then at Alexandretta, the port of Aleppo, one of the many places where the whale is said to have rejected Jonah. In Beirût, a city whose attractions lie solely in its situation, we had to wait a week for a ship going to Cyprus ; but eventually landed at Larnaca, and drove from there to the capital of the island, tree-embowered Nicosia.

To the minds of many the name of Cyprus will conjure up visions of an island teeming with shrines and temples of pagan divinities ; its sites of Paphos and Salamis, of Amathus and Idalium, suggest votive statues and columns of snowy marble gleaming among the groves of dark green myrtle beloved of Aphrodite. Those who may come to Cyprus expecting to see such things will be disappointed : evidence of the artistic activity of the classical age must be sought in the British Museum, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and in the attractive little Museum of

Nicosia, rather than on the sites which once made Cyprus famous. In the opening sentence of this chapter I have indicated the age which has left the most enduring monuments on the soil of the island. Enriched, on the fall of the Christian states of Syria, by the arrival of their knights and merchants driven to seek refuge on its shores, the mediaeval Cypriot kingdom raised on the ruins of the Crusades a fabric of wealth and prosperity unequalled in the Levant. To the splendours of those days many mediaeval buildings of great beauty most eloquently attest ; and, set amid lovely surroundings of forest and mountain and sea, richly reward the visitor to this strangely unvisited isle.

Few countries have had so chequered a career as Cyprus. In the earlier stages of its history it was successively under the dominion of more races than it is convenient to enumerate ; then passed, after a brief spell of independence, into the possession of Rome and Byzantium. Toward the close of the twelfth century A.D. it fell into the hands of one Isaac Ducas Comnenus, a ruffianly scion of the imperial house of Comnenus who had rebelled against Constantinople and proclaimed himself Emperor of Cyprus. He must have been, from all accounts, a singularly repellent person ; and we are told by a chronicler of the period that he “emitted, when angry, strange noises resembling the bubbling of a kettle, his lower jaw trembling all the while with excitement.” Now at this time, or, to be precise, on the 10th of April, 1191, King Richard Cœur de Lion set sail from Messina to take part in the third Crusade ; and in his fleet, although not in his ship, were his betrothed wife Berengaria of Navarre and his sister Joanna, Queen Dowager of Sicily. On Good

Friday, the 12th of April, an ill wind dispersed the fleet. Richard was driven to Rhodes, and thence into the Satalian Gulf ; while many of his vessels, including the ‘very large ship of the sort called a buss’ conveying the royal ladies, were blown on to the shores of Cyprus. Some of these were wrecked, and plundered by Isaac ; but the Queen and the Queen-to-be found anchorage off the roadstead of Limasol, where Isaac tried to inveigle them into landing. So little confidence, however, did his manner inspire, that they took fright at his insistence. Fortunately, on the very day that they had been obliged to promise compliance with his desire, “ behold, there appeared in the distance, like crows, on the foaming summit of the curling waters, two vessels, driven forwards and sailing swiftly towards them.” It was the van of King Richard’s fleet, arriving in the nick of time—to the great relief of the Queens, and to the discomfiture of the Emperor.

He, nevertheless, assumed an air of defiance ; and when Richard, on hearing what had occurred, sent two knights to ask satisfaction for the injuries received, became very indignant. Ejaculating the monosyllable ‘*pruht*,’ he dismissed the embassy with abuse, whereupon Richard, now thoroughly angry, ‘ shouted aloud “ To arms ! ” ’ landed, seized Limasol, and drove Isaac to flight. And on the following Sunday, being the festival of St. Pancras, he married Berengaria in the chapel of the castle of Limasol, which you may see to-day ; and Berengaria was there crowned Queen of the English. The conquest of the island was completed within a fortnight ; and Isaac, in silver chains, was handed over, for safe custody, to the tender mercies of the Hospitallers, in whose Syrian castle of Merkab or Margat he perished in 1194.

Thus, entirely by chance, was brought about the first English occupation of Cyprus, an occupation remarkable principally for its brevity. It had been no part of Richard's plan to dally in the Mediterranean ; five days after Isaac's surrender the King departed for Acre. An offer for his new conquest was now made by the Knights Templar; and Richard, needing money and ill able to afford to keep a garrison in Cyprus, sold the island to them for a hundred thousand bezants. But the Templars, too, discovered Cyprus to be a burden, and could not spare from Syria a sufficiency of men to keep the turbulent Cypriots in check. At this juncture Guy de Lusignan, a noble of Poitou who *jure uxoris* had been King of Jerusalem and had lost that kingdom in an inglorious manner subsequently to be related, was persuaded by Richard to seek compensation in the acquisition of the island. So in 1192 he bought it of the Templars at the same price at which it had been sold by Richard, and laid the foundation of the dynasty which was to give eighteen sovereigns to Cyprus.

"The three hundred years during which it was ruled by the Kings and Queens of the House of Lusignan," I quote from what I have written elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> "were the most brilliant epoch in the varied history of Cyprus. In every aspect of mediaeval civilization the little kingdom played a distinguished part ; its remarkable achievements in every domain of human activity invested it with an importance among the nations of Europe wholly out of proportion to its small size and population. Its constitution was a model of that of the mediaeval feudal state ; its laws, as embodied in the

<sup>1</sup> Lukach and Jardine, *The Handbook of Cyprus*, London : Stanford, 1913.

*Assizes of Jerusalem*, a pattern of mediaeval jurisprudence. It can boast, in the abbey of Bella Paise, in the cathedrals of Nicosia and Famagusta, in the castles of St. Hilarion, Buffavento, and Kantara, of rarely beautiful examples of mediaeval architecture ; its men of letters, Philippe de Novare, Guillaume de Machaut, Philippe de Mézières, occupy no undistinguished place in the realm of literature. In King Peter I. it possessed perhaps the greatest Knight-Errant the world has ever seen ; in his Order of the Sword the most perfect expression of chivalrous ideals. To Kings of Cyprus such widely different writers as St. Thomas Aquinas and Boccaccio dedicated works ; the wealth of its citizens, especially in the fourteenth century, evoked the amazement of all western visitors. The rich merchants of Famagusta were wont, we are told, to give to their daughters, on their marriage, jewels more precious ‘que toutes les parures de la reine de France.’ Admittedly there was a less attractive side to this efflorescence of French civilization on the rich Levantine soil : ‘Fastus gallicus, syra mollities, graecae blanditiae ac fraudes quae unam videlicet in insulam convenere’ is the epigram by which a contemporary describes the character of the inhabitants of Cyprus in those days.”

The last legitimate sovereign of the House of Lusignan was Charlotte, daughter of John II. and his Greek wife, Helena Palaeologus. This luckless Queen had reigned for barely two years when her illegitimate brother James, son of King John by a lady whose nose Queen Helena had bitten off in an access of jealous rage, rose against her and, although at the time Archbishop-elect of Nicosia, seized the throne. This was in 1460, and the end of the kingdom was now very



LUSIGNAN COAT OF ARMS IN KYRENIA



LUSIGNAN COAT OF ARMS IN FAMAGUSTA



A CYPRIOT TURK



near. The republics of Genoa and Venice had long coveted the island ; indeed, Genoa had been in possession of Famagusta since 1376. James II. threw in his lot with Venice, drove the Genoese out of Famagusta, and accepted from the Signory as his wife the beautiful Katharine Cornaro. Venice only used him, however, to further her own designs, and probably instructed her agents in Cyprus in the sense of the lines :

“ Thou shalt not kill, but do not strive  
Officially to keep alive.”

At all events James died, while still a young man, in 1473, under circumstances which suggested poison ; and in the following year his posthumous child, James III., also expired. Katharine was permitted to retain nominal sovereignty until 1489, when she perforce abdicated in favour of Venice ; and for the ensuing eighty years Cyprus was a Venetian dependency, paying tribute to the Sultan of Turkey.

Seven miles west of the town of Limasol, in one of the most fertile parts of this very fertile country, the Gothic keep of Kolossi raises its massive walls in the midst of an estate which was once the ‘Grand Commandery’ and headquarters of the Hospitallers in Cyprus. The Grand Commandery possessed the best vineyards of an island then famous throughout Europe for its wines ; and from them was made, and is made to this day, the sweet and heavy wine known in consequence as *Comanderia*. I must confess that, unless the vines have deteriorated much in later times, it is somewhat difficult to appreciate the enthusiasm which *Comanderia* inspired in the gourmets of the middle ages ; so strongly did it tickle the palate of Sultan Selim II., pleasantly nick-

named ‘the Sot,’ that he determined to annex to his dominions a land producing so delicious a beverage. A Jewish adventurer named Joseph Nasi introduced *Comanderia* to the notice of the bibulous monarch. Armed with his potent argument, Nasi craftily urged the conquest of Cyprus in the hope of obtaining it as a fief from his imperial boon companion. As a matter of fact, he had to content himself with the Duchy of Naxos, while Selim died through slipping on the marble floor of his bath when overfull of the alluring liquid. In the meantime, however, Selim’s general, Lala Mustafa, had taken Nicosia and Famagusta, thereby making himself master of the island. Nicosia surrendered to the Turks on the 9th of September, 1570, after a courageous defence of six weeks ; while Famagusta, owing to its superior fortifications and to the heroism of Bragadino, its commander, was able to hold out from the 18th of September, 1570, until the 1st of August of the following year. The defence of the two towns was the redeeming feature of the stupid and oppressive domination of Venice ; the cruel and treacherous murder of Bragadino the darkest blot on the rule of the Turks. Apart from this incident Turkish rule in Cyprus, while unprogressive, was not as harsh as some historians have asserted : it abolished serfdom, restored the Orthodox archbishopric which had been suppressed by the Latins in the thirteenth century, and gave virtual autonomy to the Christian population.

There runs along the north coast of the island, and extends into the Karpass peninsula, which, like an index finger, points at the shore of Syria, a narrow serrated ridge called the Kyrenia Mountains, a ridge tinged at



INTERIOR OF ST. SOFIA, NICOSIA

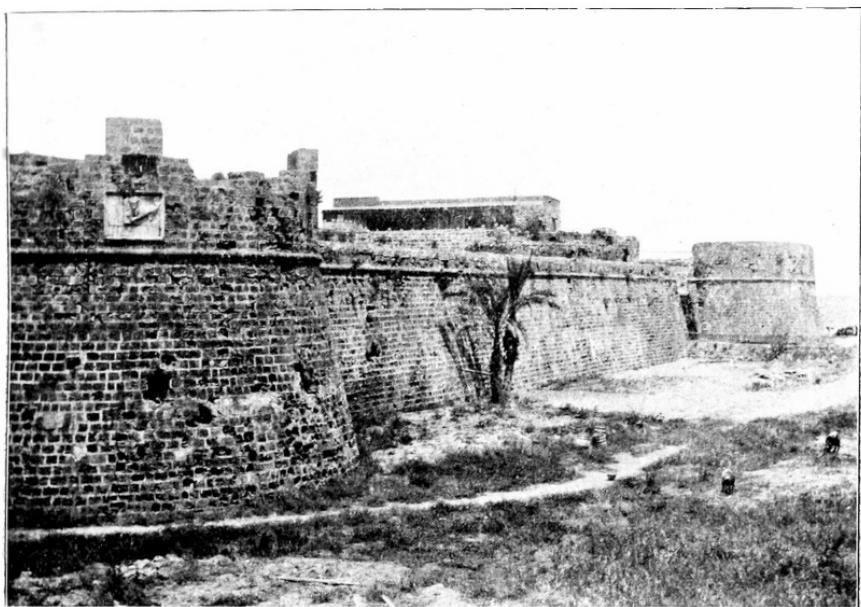
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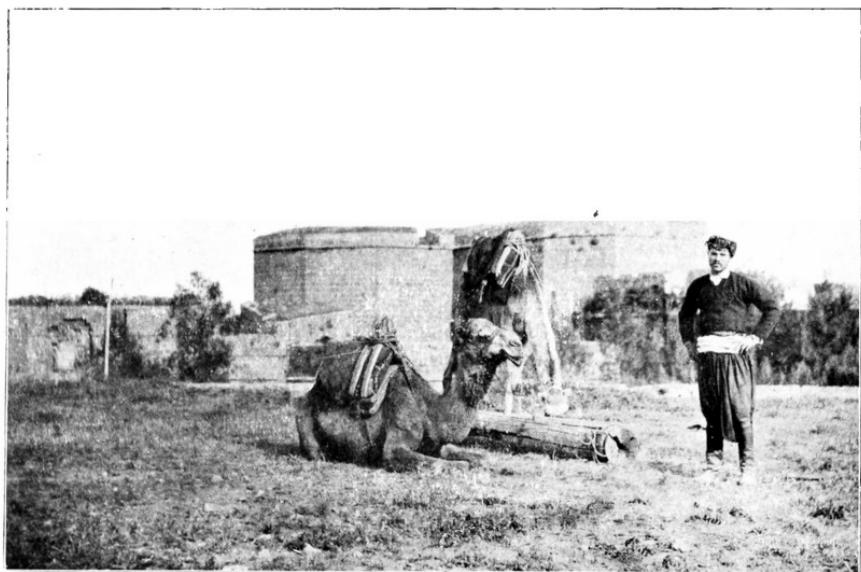
sunset with hues that incarnadine its rocks and illumine with deep glow its scattered patches of forest. In the south-west part of the island a more compact mass of mountains culminates in Mount Troödos or Olympus. Between the two, bounded on the east and west by the sea, stretches the treeless but fertile Mesaoria plain, the granary of Cyprus, in the middle of which is situated the capital, Nicosia, despite the fact that the capitals of islands do not lie, as a rule, inland. And a very pretty town it is, partly Gothic, partly Turkish, enclosed within the now somewhat dilapidated defences hastily constructed by the Venetians. A profusion of date-palms and minarets rises above its whitewashed houses and above the mud walls which conceal its gardens ; while over all else towers the Great Mosque, once the Cathedral of St. Sophia. In winter time, when cold breezes from the Taurus or from snow-laden Olympus blow across the Mesaoria, Nicosia is redolent with the fragrance of burning olive wood ; later on, it is pervaded by the scent of jonquils and other wild flowers which are one of the joys of spring in Cyprus. As you wander through its tortuous streets, you light on many a sculptured fragment, a porch, a coat of arms, or a cornice, once part of some Lusignan or Venetian mansion ; many churches, foremost among them St. Sophia, survive intact or tolerably preserved from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Nearly all the Gothic churches of Nicosia became mosques at the Turkish conquest, and only one is still used as a place of Christian worship. This is the Church of Notre Dame de Tyr, which the Turks made over to the Armenians.

It is a mistake to suppose that the interests of Turks

and Armenians have always been at variance. Until the year 1890, when their aspirations began to arouse the distrust of the Turkish authorities, the Armenians were called *millet-i-sadıqa*, ‘the loyal nation’; and as such had served the Turks for centuries in the capacities of man of business, dragoman, and go-between. The Turks rewarded them for their usefulness with protection; and preferred them to other *rayahs* because they were Orientals, and therefore in closer touch than Serbs or Greeks with Turkish habits and thoughts. Thus it was that, when Latin and Greek churches in Cyprus were converted into mosques, Notre Dame de Tyr was given to the representatives of the ‘loyal nation.’ An Armenian community had long been settled in the island; its connexion with Cyprus was bound up with the near relationship between the royal Houses of Lusignan and Armenia, a relationship through which, on the death in 1393 of the Armenian King Leo VI. without issue, the crown of Armenia (but little else besides) passed to his cousin King James I. of Cyprus. Lamartine, impressed by the industrious and thrifty qualities of the Armenians, has called them the Swiss of the East. It would be truer to say that they are the Jews of Christendom. Like the Jews, they are scattered all over the world, yet cling with remarkable tenacity to their national characteristics and religion; as in the case of the Jews, dispersion is due to the lack of all aptitude for kingdom-building. Both peoples possess the pliancy and adaptability acquired in the service of other races; both have that genius for trading and finance which makes it convenient for them to select separate spheres of action. You very rarely find communities of Jews



THE CASTLE AND OTHELLO'S TOWER, FAMAGUSTA



OUTSIDE THE WALLS, FAMAGUSTA



and Armenians in the same small town ; by some sort of tacit understanding they avoid poaching on one another's preserves. The only Jews in Cyprus are the settlers of a small agricultural colony ; and it is related that when a Hebrew more commercially inclined came to spy out the land at the instigation of the Jewish community of Beirût, he retired rapidly in disgust. This gentleman landed at Larnaca with his donkey in the early days of the British occupation. On the wharf he gave a *metalîq*<sup>1</sup> to a small boy, and said :

“Buy me some food for myself, some food for my ass, something for me to amuse myself with, and you may keep the change.”

The boy ran off and returned with a water melon.

“Here’s your stuff,” said he.

“What do you mean ?” replied the Jew.

“Well, you can eat the inside of the melon and your donkey can eat the rind, while you can play with the pips ; and as it only cost 2 paras, I get 8 for myself, and will take as many more commissions as you like to give me.”

The Jew ate his melon, kicked the donkey, and returned to Beirût by the boat which had brought him.

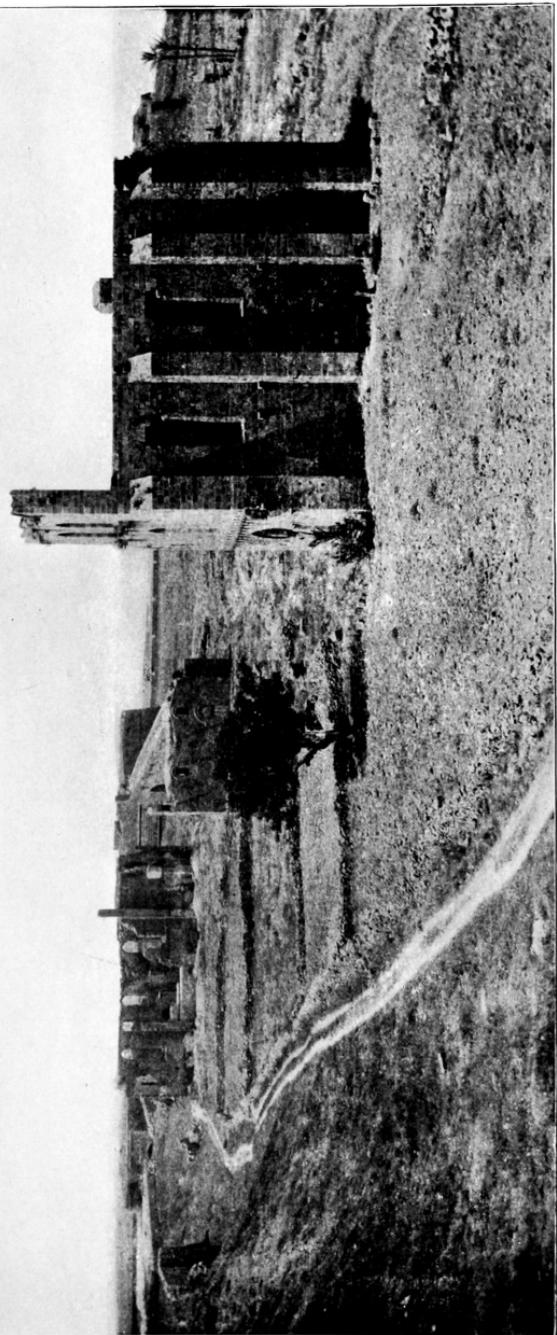
“The Fortresse of Rhodes, and that Fortresse Famogusta, in Cyprus, are the two strongest holds in all the Empire of the great Turke.” So said William Lithgow in 1610 ; and the likening of Rhodes to Famagusta, the eastern harbour of Cyprus, must have been very apt when that persevering Scot made his journey into the Levant. At the present time it requires qualification. Mr. Maurice Hewlett remarks, in *The Road in Tuscany*, that Volterra is a withered, an anaemic

<sup>1</sup> A bronze coin worth slightly over a farthing.

Florence; and in imitation of Mr. Hewlett's simile I would say that Famagusta is an atrophied Rhodes. Perhaps I should go further; for the dour little Etruscan hill-town is inhabited by a race as dour as itself, whereas the scene of the tragedy of Othello is abandoned but for a few humble Turkish dwellings. In truth, Famagusta is more than atrophied: it is the skeleton of what was once the richest mart of the Levant. Yet it is not difficult to realize to-day how great must have been the wealth and vigour of the city well called the 'mediaeval Pompeii.' If few traces of its domestic buildings have survived, the profusion and beauty of its ecclesiastical remains bear witness to its past glory, its remarkable fortifications to its value as a place of war. Within the walls, still happily intact, are fields and waste lands covered with débris, and the stones of its palaces have been sold to the builders of Port Said. But scattered over the fields are countless churches, ruinous and roofless, whose exquisite Gothic arches emerge from the desert town like the ribs of camels from the sands of the Sahara. And although their architecture is French, they were not all of the faith of the ruling class: almost every creed and race was represented. In short, the Famagusta of the middle ages was a cosmopolitan city of immense importance, famed throughout Europe for the wealth, luxury, and lavish living of its inhabitants; and notorious, I regret to say, for the laxity of its morals. Nobles hunted and jested, and dyed the tails of their dogs and horses scarlet; merchants built churches with one-third of the profits of a single journey; courtesans enjoyed, it is related, fortunes of more than a hundred thousand florins. In its desolation Famagusta now shares the

RUINED CHURCHES OF FAMAGUSTA

Facing p. 64.





fate of its predecessor Salamis, whose scanty ruins lie six miles to the north ; nevertheless, in one respect its abandonment is less complete. The city within the walls, indeed, is all but deserted. In recent years, however, its excellent harbour has been dredged and enlarged at a great cost ; and outside the walls has grown up a thriving commercial town which bids fair to recall some of the old prosperity, and to make of Famagusta once more the principal port of Cyprus.

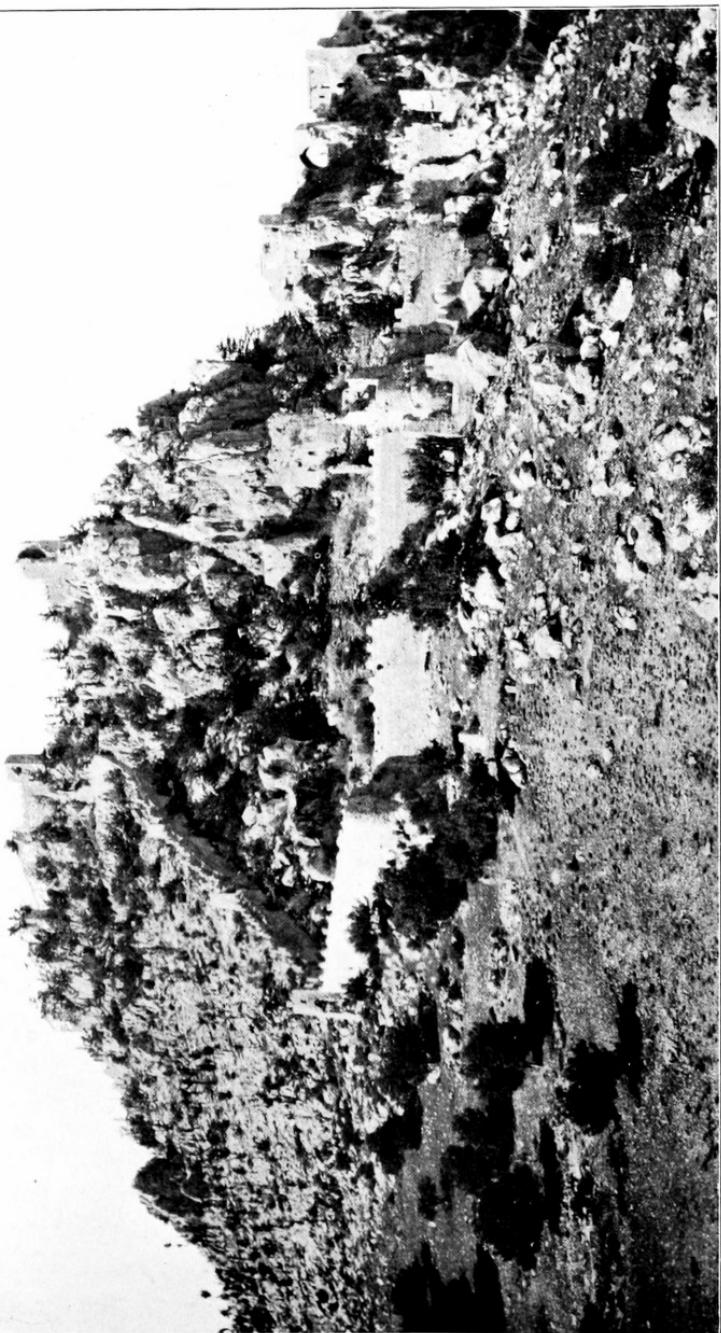
This extra-mural Famagusta is the eastern terminus of a railway which runs through the Mesaoria, parallel with the Kyrenia Mountains, to the western end of the island. To him who would savour something of the more recondite charm of Cyprus, I would recommend to reject the ease of the train, and with tent and mule to travel along the higher level. Clinging to the steepest and loftiest crags of the range are Lusignan castles of astounding picturesqueness ; between them nestle, unsuspected from below, such fairy-like spots as Khalevga and the forest of Qartal Dagh. Nor are the names a whit less beautiful than the places. The most easterly of the castles, thickly overgrown by the spreading cypress, is Kantara, from whose walls you survey the Karpass to the east, the Mesaoria and the Bay of Famagusta to the south, and to the north, beyond the intervening sea, the snow-capped mountains of Asia Minor. Further westward, beyond Homericly named Pentedactylos, 'the five-fingered peak,' comes impregnable Buffavento, rearing its turrets in defiance of the winds on the very summit of the ridge. Still further to the west is St. Hilarion or Dieu d'Amour, a castle as lovely as the others, and connected, besides, with the oldest of

Cyprian myths. The early history of Cyprus is lost in the mists of antiquity; but there is reason to believe that Aphrodite, by all accounts a goddess of discernment, rose from the sea on the drifts of white foam which to this day are borne by the breeze on to the rocky shore of Paphos; and that, having chosen this delectable island for her realm, she further selected the castle of Dieu d'Amour in which to give birth to her son Eros. It is true that the antiquary will find little in the existing buildings to confirm this belief; and there are pedants callous enough to maintain that Dieu d'Amour is a Frankish corruption of Didymos, which, they say, was the ancient name of the twin crests now occupied by the castle. If we grant, however, that Eros was born somewhere, then, clearly, St. Hilarion, or Dieu d'Amour, or Didymos (let us not quarrel with the pedants), must have been the place. And as Cyprus is a land of bees, here, probably, was the scene of the disaster of which Anacreon sings in the ode beginning :

Ἐρως ποτ' ἐν ρόδοισιν  
 κοιμωμένην μέλιτταν  
 οὐκ εἴδεν· ἀλλ' ἐτρώθη  
 τὸν δάκτυλον.

St. Hilarion overlooks, in the strip of land at the foot of the northern slope of the mountains, one of the most charming regions of Cyprus. Here the olive and caroub trees are ampler than elsewhere, the verdure richer; elsewhere the cyclamen ‘never blows so red.’ Below Hilarion lies the pretty seaport of Kyrenia, in whose massive castle the Emperor Isaac’s daughter sought refuge and Queen Charlotte held out for four years against her brother James. To the right is the Abbey of

CASTLE OF ST. HILARION





Bella Paise, in all likelihood the most important as well as the most beautiful monument of the Latin East ; to the left, Lapethos with its monastery of Acheiropoietos, dedicated to the image of Christ 'not wrought by the hand of man.'<sup>1</sup> Of the beauties of Bella Paise it is beyond my powers to give an adequate description ; paints, and not phrases, are the medium for the purpose. In a delightful article on 'Some Aspects of Cyprus,'<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bertram, formerly Puisne Judge, has compared Bella Paise to Tintern ; but with what can Tintern match the sweeping curve of mountains, the blue sea and distant Asian ranges, the groves of oranges and lemons, and the stonework tinged with gold ?

Of a different kind are the attractions of the mountains which occupy most of the south-western part of the island. Their summits, higher but less abrupt than those of the Kyrenia Mountains, are covered with fragrant pine forests, not with castles ; no beautiful abbeys lurk in their deep and rugged valleys. In the Kyrenia Mountains nature and art compete with the happiest results ; in the others, nature's efforts are stimulated only by the Forest Department of the Cyprus Government. And it is well for Cyprus that British rule, with its Forest Department, arrived when it did ; since for centuries the peasants had been destroying, with almost incredible improvidence, one of the island's most precious resources. When, during the summer months, the plains become unbearably hot, the Troödos Mountains provide a delightful retreat. The air is as bracing as that of the Engadine ; countless rides through the forests reveal wide views over the vine-clad

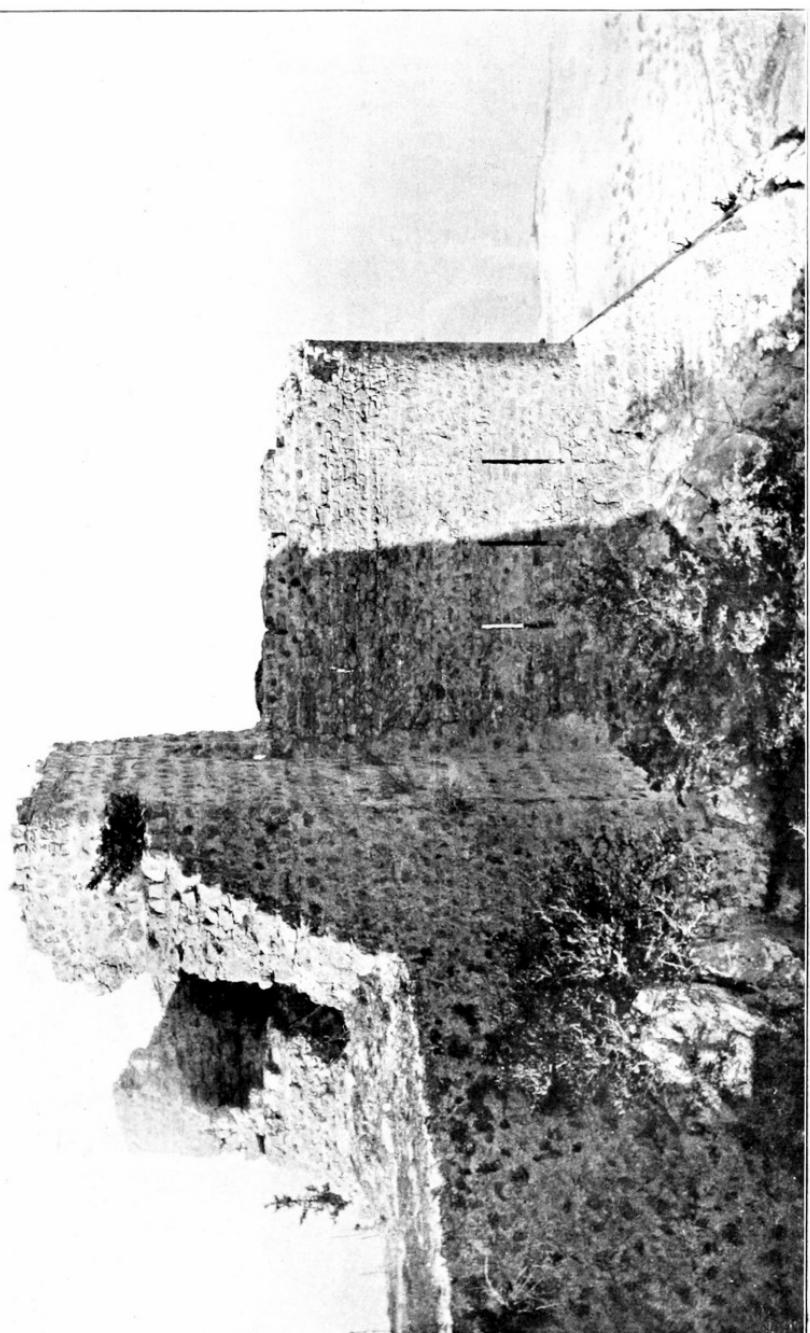
<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> *Travel and Exploration*, October, 1909.

Districts of Limasol and Paphos ; the nights are sometimes cool enough for fires of sweet-smelling fir-cones. And in these mountains, especially in the wild valleys of Stavros and Ayia which lead down to Paphos, are the haunts of the vanishing and elusive moufflon, last survivor of the bigger game of Cyprus.

Paphos, or Baffo, in the Italianized form of the name surviving in the parlance of the people, has had three different situations. The Paphos of Aphrodite is now the village of Kouklia. Ten miles to the west of it is the Paphos of the Romans, where Paul and Barnabas, after travelling from Salamis through the length of the island, converted Sergius Paulus the Deputy, and where Paul struck Elymas the sorcerer with blindness. A mile and a half, again, from Roman Paphos is the modern capital of the District. Another vanishing race, not of animals but of people, dwells on the other slope of the mountains, in the region of Tyllirià. This is the sect to whose members the name of Linobambakoi or 'Flax-cottons' is given, because their religious position oscillates between Christianity and Islam. The Linobambakoi lead double lives in the truest sense of the phrase. They have Moslem and Christian names, which they use as the occasion requires, and they impartially observe the feasts, fasts, and ceremonies of both religions. They are commonly believed to be descended from Latin Christians, who outwardly embraced Islam to escape inconvenience at the time of the Turkish conquest, while secretly retaining their old faith. On the other hand, similar sects are not unknown in Asia Minor, witness the Stavriotai of Lazistan ; and it may be that the Linobambakoi are of Moslem origin, and that in accordance with a very old superstition they were baptized

KANTARA CASTLE, LOOKING NORTH





in order to lose the peculiar smell which that superstition attributed to infidels.<sup>1</sup>

A word, too, should be said about the Orthodox Church of Cyprus. The fortunate discovery in Salamis, in the reign of the Emperor Zeno, of St. Barnabas's body together with a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel in Barnabas's handwriting secured from that Emperor the confirmation of the claim of the Cypriot Church to be independent and autocephalous.<sup>2</sup> It also secured to the Archbishops of Cyprus the privileges of signing in red ink, a right otherwise exclusively confined to the Emperor, of wearing a purple cope, and of carrying an imperial sceptre in place of the ordinary pastoral staff. The independence of the Church and the privileges then accorded to its primates have been jealously maintained to the present day; lately, however, the Church has acquired a certain amount of not altogether creditable notoriety by the amazing duel for the archbishopric whereby from 1900 to 1910 the island was convulsed. I will not attempt to describe this struggle in its details, which have more in common with the ecclesiastical disputes of the Dark Ages than with proceedings of the twentieth century; but will confine myself to an outline of what took place. The hierarchy of Cyprus consists of an Archbishop of All Cyprus and of the three Metropolitan Bishops of Paphos, Kition (Larnaca), and Kyrenia. In 1899 the Bishop of Paphos died; and in 1900, before a successor had been elected, the Arch-

<sup>1</sup> In 1432 the Burgundian knight Bertrandon de la Brocquière related of 'Ramedan, lord of Turcomania' that his mother "had caused him to be baptized according to the Greek ritual, to take from him the smell and odour of those who are not baptized."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 113.

bishop, Sophronios II., also died, only two Bishops thus remaining in the island. These were Kyrillos of Kition and Kyrillos of Kyrenia, between whom and whose supporters a desperate struggle for the primacy now ensued. The Bishop of Kition was the popular favourite; he of Kyrenia the candidate of the Holy Synod, under whose supervision the elections to the archbishopric are carried out. Wherefore, after much wrangling, the Bishop of Kition retired from the Synod, pronouncing its constitution to be uncanonical and its acts void. After some years of profitless agitation and intrigue, which divided the Greek-Christian population of the island into two camps, and provoked much ill feeling, it was decided to refer the dispute to the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. Their intervention failed, however, to advance matters, and the struggle was resumed, when suddenly, on the 23rd of February, 1908, the Patriarch of Constantinople telegraphed that, as no way out of the impasse could be found, he and his Synod had elected the Bishop of Kyrenia to the vacant primacy. The utmost excitement was produced in Cyprus by this news. There was rioting in Nicosia, and the Government refused to recognize the appointment on the ground that it constituted an infringement of the autocephalic rights of the Church of Cyprus. Eventually legislation was resorted to in order to put an end to an impossible and scandalous situation, and, as the Kition party was in a majority among the Greek-Christian members of the Legislative Council, the Bishop of Kition was elected Archbishop under the auspices of the Extraordinary Synod, principally composed of foreign prelates, which was created by the 'Archiepiscopal Election Law' of



THE LATE ARCHBISHOP SOPHRONIOS II SITTING IN STATE



1908. The Kyrenia party, which regarded its candidate as the duly appointed Archbishop, held aloof from the election, and for a year there were two Archbishops in Cyprus and schism in the Church. Finally, in 1910, the Bishop of Kyrenia, realizing that further resistance was hopeless, made his submission to his rival, and was permitted, in return, to assume the title of Beatitude in recognition of his status as an ex-Archbishop.

But after the reconciliation had been effected, there remained one who, *plus royaliste que le roi*, refused to abandon the Kyrenia cause and accept the new Archbishop. Although the politicians of the opposing parties, and the protagonists, too, were at peace, the old Archimandrite Philotheos would have nothing to do with the arrangement. He was verging on ninety when Archbishop Sophronios died, but threw himself with the utmost energy into the struggle for the election of his successor. From honest conviction he opposed the attempts of the Bishop of Kition to gain the archbishopric, and, having accumulated, in the course of his long life, a fortune of between two and three thousand pounds, devoted the whole of this sum to promoting the candidature of the Bishop of Kyrenia. Its failure was a heavy blow to him, and he refused to be a party to the *rapprochement*. The new Archbishop had agreed, as a condition of the settlement, to recognize Philotheos as Archimandrite of the archdiocese, or to grant him a pension should he wish to retire. Philotheos would take from him neither pension nor recognition, and, leaving Nicosia for ever, sought refuge with the Abbot of Kykko, another champion of the Kyrenia party, in his monastery in the heart of the Paphos Mountains. Here he was given

asylum, and here he is determined to end his days, carrying with unshaken vigour into his twentieth lustre the convictions for which he has sacrificed wealth, home, and position.

Such, briefly, is the history of this unedifying dispute, whose like it would be hard to find even in the annals of that hotbed of ecclesiastical bickering, Jerusalem, whither we now wended our way.

## CHAPTER IV.

### JERUSALEM. I.

JERUSALEM has, from the very outset, a disconcerting effect, and is, of all cities, the most difficult to describe. No other place has had so long and varied a history, has so profoundly affected the course of the human race. A holy city before it was chosen by the Founder of Christianity as the site of the fulfilment of the prophecies, it is the cradle of the Jew, the goal of the Christian, the sanctuary of the Moslem. Its annals are so amazing, and withal so diverse, that they bewilder and dismay. Most peoples of antiquity and many of later ages have been its masters. Jews, Egyptians, and Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, and Persians, Arabs, Crusaders, Turks, and several others have been in possession for greater or lesser periods. Some have left their mark and some have not ; all have had a hand in contributing to the chaos of its history and in multiplying the aspects under which it presents itself to-day.

Even at first sight Jerusalem appears as a place apart, as different from other cities of the East. It seems as if enshrouded by a veil of sanctity which isolates it from the outer world. It has always been a spiritual rather than a temporal capital ; its importance has owed nothing to riches or material advantages, nor has it

attracted them. Commerce has avoided it. To-day it is still poor and small ; and although empty spaces within its walls are no longer numerous, the bustle and movement usually inseparable from the life of eastern towns are noticeably absent. Its bazaars are mean, and only adapted to the needs of its inhabitants and poorer pilgrims. Its streets are often quiet and deserted ; its people, except at certain ecclesiastical ceremonies, grave and preoccupied. The Arabs who stride by with the dignity of their race, the decrepit and picturesque old Jews shuffling about their business in silence, the bands of pilgrims devoutly following the Stations of the Cross, seem overcome with a spirit of hushed solemnity, a spirit which permeates and almost oppresses the Holy City of the three greatest religions of the world.

It is because of the place which Jerusalem fills in the imagination of so large a section of mankind that no description of minor monuments and sites would appear to be required here. There is much in and around Jerusalem to interest the pilgrim, much to impress, not a little to disappoint ; but two places, it seems to me, sum up finally and completely the significance of the city to Christian, Moslem, and Jew. Towering far above all else, dwarfing every other object by their stupendous associations, rise the two strongholds of rival faiths which are the essence and core of Jerusalem. One is the Haram esh-Sherîf on Mount Zion ; the other, that strange caravanserai, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Those who know the East will have observed the tenacity with which religious tradition remains attached to certain sites. Of this phenomenon the Haram is probably the most notable example.

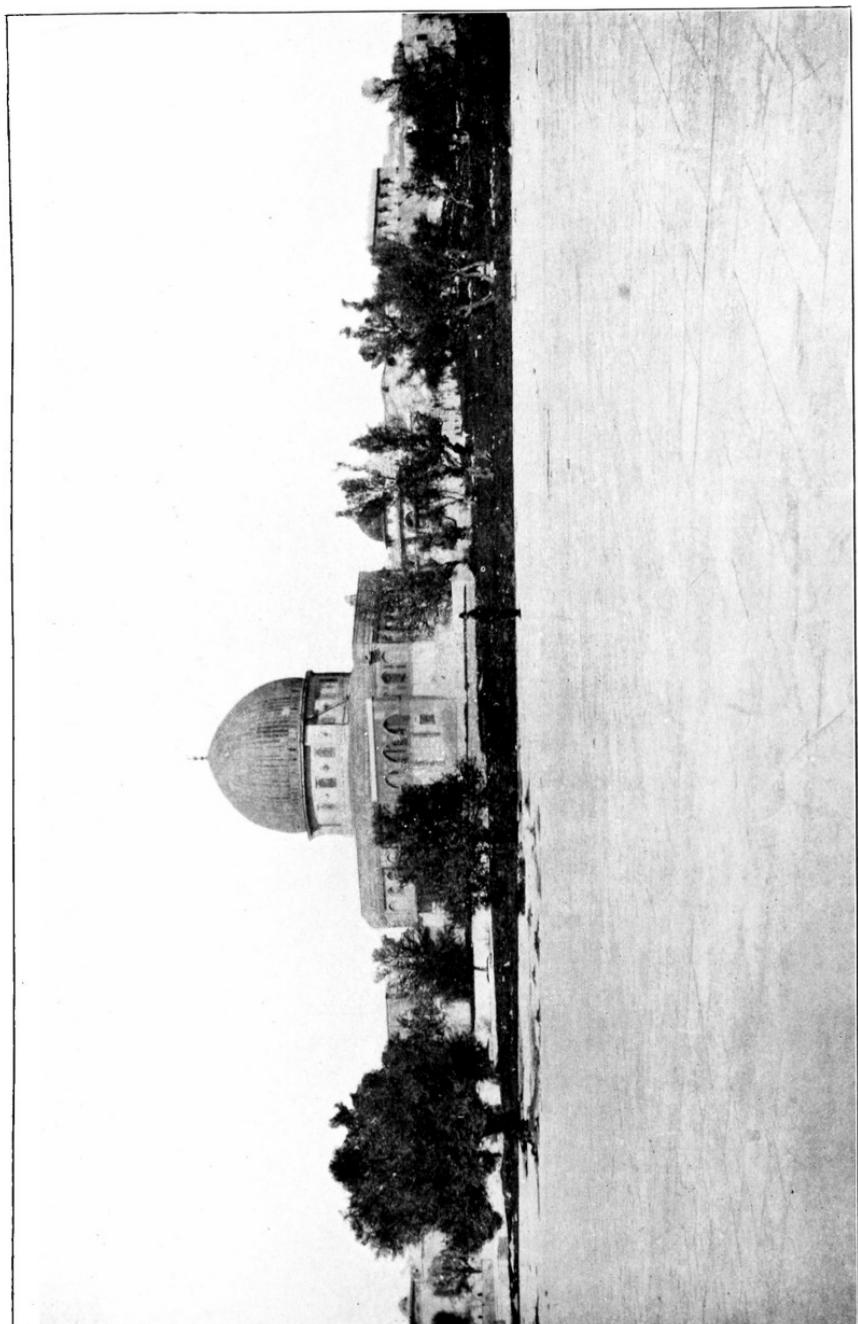
In the middle of the Haram enclosure is a rock called by the Arabs Es-Sakhra and surmounted by one of the triumphs of Arab architecture, a rock around which in the course of ages a mass of legend has accumulated. It is believed to hover without support over a chasm in which the waters of the flood are heard to roar ; it is believed to be the centre of the world, the gate of hell, and much else of a fantastic nature. It is also believed, and this belief has the support of the Talmud, to have been the site of the sacrifice of Isaac. According to Maundeville, almost every event in sacred history was enacted upon it : "And Jacob was sleeping upon that rock when he saw the Angels go up and down by a ladder, and he said 'Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not.' And there an Angel held Jacob still, and changed his name, and called him Israel. And in that same place David saw the Angel that smote the people with a sword, and put it up bloody in the sheath. And St. Simeon was on that same rock when he received our Lord into the Temple. On that rock our Lord preached frequently to the people, and out of that same Temple our Lord drove the buyers and sellers. Upon that rock also our Lord set him when the Jews would have stoned him, and the rock clave in two, and in that cleft was our Lord hid. And there came down a Star and gave him light, and upon that rock Our Lady sat and learned her Psalter, and there our Lord forgave the woman her sins that was found in adultery. And there our Lord was circumcised, and there the Angel gave tidings to Zacharias of the birth of St. John the Baptist, his son ; and there first Melchisedek offered bread and wine to our Lord in token of the sacrament that was to come,

and there David fell down praying to our Lord and to the Angel that smote the people, that he would have mercy on him and on the people, and our Lord heard his prayer, and therefore would he make the Temple in that place, but our Lord forbade him by an Angel because he had done treason, when he caused Uriah the worthy knight to be slain, to have Bathsheba his wife, and therefore all the materials he had collected for the building of the Temple he gave to Solomon his son, and he built it."

Maundeville's imagination is unequalled, and he revels in an opportunity of this kind, but there is no doubt that from a very remote period the Sakhra has powerfully affected the popular imagination. It is impossible to say when it was first regarded as holy, but by the time of David its reputation was definitely established. From that day to this, notwithstanding the startling changes which have come over Jerusalem, it has been what the name **Haram esh-Sherîf** signifies, 'the chief sanctuary.' Race upon race has possessed the city, faith has succeeded faith, but the **Haram** has compelled the allegiance of every master. It has been possessed in turn, and is revered together by Jews, Christians, and Moslems; it has been successively the site of temple, church, and mosque. The Jews regard it with awe as having been the embodiment of their race, religion, and traditions, the shrine of all that was most holy to them. The Christians, who in their loathing for the Jews treated it at first with contumely, and cast dung upon it, came in time to regard it with almost equal respect. Under the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem the **Qubbet<sup>1</sup> es-Sakhra** was known as

<sup>1</sup> Dome.

THE DOME OF THE ROCK





Templum Domini, and had a foundation of abbot and canons regular; the Jami' el-'Aksa became Templum Salomonis, and gave housing and its name to the Knights Templar; the rock was embellished with an altar at which mass was said daily, and was considered by the Crusaders as next in sanctity to the Holy Sepulchre itself.

The Moslems also regard the place as holy. Mohammed had ever a leaning to Jerusalem, and endeavoured to communicate his sentiments to his followers by connecting it with various incidents in his own career. Thus, mounted on El-Buraq, his magic steed of the human face, he made the journey from Mecca to Jerusalem in a single night; and again, when the time for his final journey was come, so says a legend, he chose the Haram as the point of his departure for heaven. No doubt desirous that his people should have a share in what seemed to him a sort of universal sanctuary, he made Jerusalem the *qibleh*<sup>1</sup> of Islam; and although he was compelled by political considerations, some years afterwards, to transfer that honour to the city of his birth, Jerusalem has never lost the hold which it had once gained on the Moslems. Their affection for it has been as sincere as that of the Christians, as constant as that of the Jews; and if the two great cities of the Hejaz have since taken the first place, it remains in their eyes 'the sister of Medina and Mecca,' rejoicing in the epithets of 'el-Quds, esh-Sherif, and el-Mubarek—the holy, the noble, the blessed.' The Haram, that palimpsest on which, one after another, its masters have written the record of their works, bears eloquent testimony to the

<sup>1</sup> Point, or direction, of adoration.

devotion of its present owners, and to the skill with which they have shown it.

The real, as opposed to the legendary, history of the Haram began with the building of the first Temple of the Jews by Solomon, King of Israel, aided by Hiram, King of Tyre, and the architect Hiram, a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali. There was no hesitation as to the choice of site. Everything pointed to Mount Zion, *Syon, mons coagulatus, mons pinguis, mons in quo beneplacitum fuit Deo habitare*; and gradually there arose on it the Temple and Solomon's Palace, whose fame soon travelled into distant lands. When the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and put an end to the existence of the Kingdom of Judah, the Temple of Solomon was destroyed; but seventy years later the Jews returned from captivity, and under great difficulties built a second temple, of necessity smaller and less pretentious, on the site of the former. This, in its turn, gave way to the Temple of Herod, the last and greatest of all.

For more than thirty years Herod the Great was King of the Jews. An up-to-date and splendour-loving prince, his chief characteristics were contempt for the old traditions of his race, unbounded admiration for the civilisations of Greece and Rome, and a passion for building. He was very much a modernist, very little a Jew; filled with western ideas, he aspired to restore the glories of his capital, and by the brilliance of his reign to eclipse the magnificence of Solomon. With the power of Rome to support him, he was able to gratify his ambition; and of him, as of Augustus, it may be said that he found his capital brick and left it marble. His residence on the west of the city, half palace, half fortress, was a marvellous combination of luxury and strength; his public

buildings could vie with those of any provincial city of the Roman Empire ; his walls and defences could surpass them. But his greatest work was the rebuilding of the Temple, of which Josephus has left a detailed description—his greatest, and withal his least enduring ; for within a century of its reconstruction, this Temple, with which he fondly hoped to inaugurate a new era of prosperity for Israel, was destined to perish in the death-struggle of the Jewish State.

After the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey, in 63 B.C., had put an end to the dynasty of the Maccabees, the Romans became virtual masters of Judaea. In 40 B.C., in consequence of an invasion of the Parthians, they placed Herod on the throne ; and for some years after his death they tolerated a succession of princes of his house, to whom they left but a semblance of authority. Meanwhile the more patriotic among the Jews had been viewing the ascendancy of the Roman element and the subservience of their kings with intense displeasure, to which they were not long in giving expression. Always a difficult people to manage, they made the task of the Roman Procurators almost impossible, causing more trouble, by their perpetual fractiousness, than any other province of their size. On the other hand, the Procurators, if we are to believe Josephus, were anything but conciliatory ; and one of them, Gessius Florus, incurred the hatred of the Jews to an exceptional extent. The detestation in which he was held, coupled with some repressive measures tactlessly undertaken, precipitated the crisis. The Jews rose in open revolt against him, overpowered the peace party, which, consisting as it did chiefly of rich bankers and merchants, had everything to gain by the Roman occupation, and established

themselves in various quarters of the town and in the Temple precincts. Cestius Gallus, Governor of Syria, besieged the city with an army of twenty thousand men, but retired when within an ace of taking it. During the interval which elapsed between his unexpected retreat and the arrival of Titus with four legions, the leaders of the insurgent factions, John of Giscala, Simon Bar-Gioras, and Eleazer, son of Ananias the high priest, behaved in a manner for which even their subsequent gallantry fails to atone. Not content with treating the non-combatants among their own people with the utmost barbarity, they committed the folly of wasting their strength on purposeless civil war, which they pursued with even greater energy as the siege began. By an unworthy ruse, John of Giscala's party annihilated that of Eleazar ; and then ensued a fierce struggle between the two surviving factions, rarely interrupted for a joint demonstration against the Romans. How, under the circumstances, they were able to make so long and so effective a stand against the besiegers is little short of marvellous ; for, despite their divisions, they kept up a defence which has few parallels in history. And after all hope of a successful issue was gone, after the Romans were in possession of three quarters of the city, they rallied round the Temple with a frenzy that bordered on madness ; and when that, too, was lost, the survivors rejected Titus's offers of clemency, and continued their despairing resistance to its inevitable end.

The third and last Temple of the Jews was destroyed by the troops of Titus on the 9th of August of the year 70, on the anniversary of the burning of the first Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. Its treasures were carried away, and its surviving defenders, after gracing the

triumph which may be seen commemorated upon the Arch of Titus in Rome, were sold into slavery. Thenceforth the Haram remained in other hands ; a temple of Jupiter rose where the Temple of Jehovah had fallen, and the existence of the Jews as a nation was at an end.

The next few centuries were comparatively uneventful in the history of the Haram. Twice more the dying flames of Judaism flared up before they were at last extinguished ; twice more the hearts of this luckless people were filled with eager hopes. But the revolt of Bar-Cochbas failed, Julian the Apostate died prematurely, and the Jews, weakened by disappointment, resigned themselves to fate.

Meanwhile a change of the utmost importance had been wrought in the Roman Empire. Christianity had taken the place of paganism as the official religion of the State, and among the first of the provinces to be affected by the change were Palestine and Syria. The unaccustomed interval of peace which the country was enjoying enabled Christian pilgrims to visit the Holy City with security, and the opportune discovery of the True Cross and the Sepulchre of Christ by the Empress Helena aroused enthusiasm at the right moment. Conversions were now of frequent occurrence, and the country was soon dotted with churches, chapels, monasteries, and the retreats of hermits, while Jerusalem was promoted from bishopric to patriarchate. Hospices were built to accommodate the ever-increasing number of pilgrims, and on the southern end of the Haram, not far from the rock which was being defiled by all manner of abominations, Justinian erected a large basilica of which he was justly proud. Justinian's reputation as a

builder was well earned; of the many pre-Islamic edifices which have stood on the Haram, his church is the only one which has continued to this day. The Jami' el-'Aksa is far from being, stone for stone, the same building as the church of the Panagia: twice it was almost destroyed by earthquakes; several times reconstructed and enlarged. But the ground plan remains unchanged, and an occasional capital and pillar show that something of the original fabric has survived. Above all, however, it is its Byzantine character, its resemblance to the great churches of Salonika and Ravenna, and, to use the words of a modern French writer,<sup>1</sup> "sa robuste silhouette d'antique basilique chrétienne," which justify its claim to continuity with the work of Justinian, and contrast it so strikingly with that masterpiece of another art beside it.

It was not until after the Mohammedan conquest that the Haram began to assume the appearance which it has to-day. Toward the end of the seventh century one 'Abdallah ibn-Zobeir of Mecca rebelled against the Omayyad Khalifs, and closed the sacred cities to all but his own supporters. Khalif 'Abd el-Melek, by way of retaliation, proposed to divert the stream of pilgrimage from Mecca to Jerusalem, and with this object undertook a complete reconstruction of the Temple area. An immense sum of money was set apart for the purpose, and the Khalif himself designed a treasure-house to contain it. This little building, when finished, so delighted him that he took it as the model for the Qubbet es-Sakhra, the mighty dome which he proceeded to build on the rock in place of the plain

<sup>1</sup> Charles Diehl, *En Méditerranée*.



THE SUMMER PULPIT



PORCH OF THE DOME OF THE ROCK



wooden structure hastily erected thereon by the Khalif 'Omar.<sup>1</sup>

It often happens that a beautiful building loses much of its effect through mean surroundings or bad situation ; the cathedrals of Seville and Florence are cases in point. Often, again, a magnificent site is wasted on an unworthy edifice. But it is a rare occurrence for a building and its frame to be so entirely complementary to each other as are the Qubbet es-Sakhra and the Haram esh-Sherîf. The Haram is the summit of Mount Zion, levelled on the north, and prolonged on the south and east by the gigantic substructions of the Kings of Judah, so as to form a vast platform enclosed by walls and occupying nearly one quarter of the city. It is the one part of Jerusalem where Islam is supreme. The seven gates leading into it from the city are zealously guarded by Turkish troops ; the few houses overlooking it may only be inhabited by Moslems ; while from the northwest corner the Antonia tower, now, as ever, part of the barracks, commands it as it did in the days of our Lord and of St. Paul.

In the middle, ten flights of steps, each surmounted by a graceful arcade, lead up to a smaller platform paved with marble, and on this pedestal rises the Dome of the Rock, majestic and detached, visible from every quarter of Jerusalem ; a few paces to the east its tiny prototype, the Dome of the Chain, once 'Abd el-Melek's treasury,

<sup>1</sup> The Dome of the Rock is sometimes erroneously called the Mosque of 'Omar. The real Mosque of 'Omar, described by Bishop Arculf, who visited Jerusalem in about 680, as "a square house of prayer erected in a rough manner by raising beams and planks upon some remains of old ruins," was presumably intended only as a temporary building. At all events, it was replaced some fifty years after its construction by the existing Qubbet of 'Abd el-Melek.

seems to look as though in wondering admiration at its mighty neighbour. A flat-roofed octagon surmounted by a dome resting on an hexagonal drum—such is its outline, simple enough to define. Less simple is it to convey an idea of its splendid isolation, its exquisite proportions, and, above all, of the revelation in colouring afforded by the tiles of blue and green and yellow and creamy white with which it is faced, and of their contrast with the sombre hues of mad Khalif Hákim's leaden dome. This contrast is repeated within, where, but for the subdued light, the eye would be dazzled by the brilliant mosaics on arches and drum, the multi-coloured glass of the windows, the rare marbles of the pavement, until, penetrating beyond the richly gilt grille of the Crusaders, it lights on the object of all this glory. For there, in the middle, its black and undulating surface suggesting the lazy heaving of an oily sea, is the *raison d'être* of the Haram, the Sakhra itself,

“monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens,”  
a crude and shapeless mass of rock, all scarred, seamed, and pitted with age and ill-usage; venerable survival of, and tangible link with days so distant as to seem unreal; unlovely to behold, but, from its very ugliness amid so much beauty, deeply and solemnly impressive.

Unconsciously this rock has done much to shape the destiny of Jerusalem, and has had in remarkable measure the faculty of attracting the veneration of all kinds of men. It has made the Haram the epitome of the history of Jerusalem, and it assured to Jerusalem the awe of the ancient world. Moreover, it has had the not inconsiderable merit of calling forth all that is best in Saracenic art, that it might be housed in a manner befitting its fame and holiness.

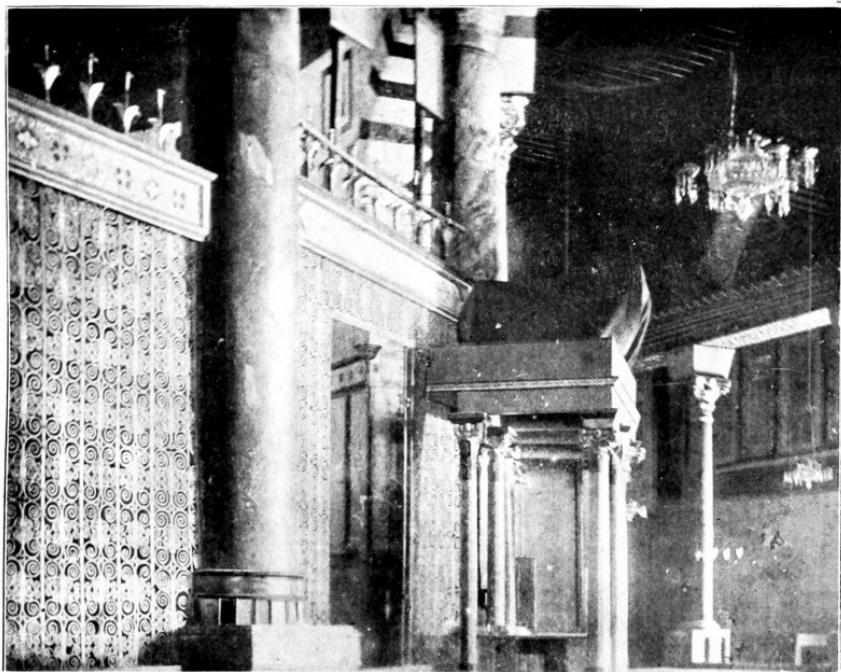
Outside, scattered haphazard about the quadrangle, are many delightful and inconsequent little buildings connected with a thousand Mohammedan superstitions: domes of every size and shape, pulpits supported by the most delicate of columns, shrines and kiosks inlaid with priceless tiles, fountains whose gentle plashing is the most entrancing form of music the Turk or Arab knows. The shade which, in conjunction with the sound of running water, produces the blissful state of *keif*<sup>1</sup> (a word defying translation, but implying all the sensations of a native of hot and barren climes as he takes his ease at midday on the greensward, and listens to the gurgling of the stream beside him) is given by olive trees, old and silvery green, also by the avenue of giant cypresses joining the Dome of the Rock to the Jami' el-'Aksa, Justinian's massive seven-aisled basilica which fills half the southern end of the Haram.

Nothing can exceed the charm of this sanctuary of Islam. It is peaceful, it is dignified, it is in characteristically good taste. It contains nothing that can offend or jar, nothing to disturb the admiration of the beholder, or the meditations of the reverend Moslems who slowly pace the expanse of white flagstone which stretches in all directions, seemingly without end.

In such a place as this, one cannot help reflecting as to the causes which produce the stateliness and the atmosphere of peace that so distinguish Mohammedan shrines from many of those of their Christian brethren in the East. One is apt to feel, after observing the two side by side, that the religions of the East are better

<sup>1</sup> The most idyllic exposition of *keif* is contained in Fitzgerald's rendering of the *Rubbâiyât* of 'Omar Khayyâm, Quatrain xii.; the most material, on pp. 175-6 of Mark Sykes's *Dar-ul-Islam*.

digested than those of the West. Catholicism and Protestantism can be equally demonstrative, equally exuberant; Mohammedanism seldom becomes so, unless it goes on the war-path or considers itself threatened. The Oriental is religious introspectively. His religion, much of which consists of regulations governing his daily life, is so much part of himself that he rarely feels the need of emphasizing it. Observe, for example, the passivity of the Buddhist, than whom none takes his religion more seriously. And the Moslem—who knows no European self-consciousness in these matters but interrupts his daily task to say his prayers in the most natural way in the world, who prostrates himself at the appointed hours, wherever he may find himself, whatever he may be doing, quietly, unobtrusively, neither shyly, as though fearing to be seen, nor ostentatiously, as seeking to attract attention—the Moslem, I say, contrives to surround Islam with a wonderful dignity. This dignity is seen in the manners, the deportment, the hospitality of the people, and very particularly in their mosques, which may be rich, but are never vulgar, are often poor, but never shoddy. The Haram affords an excellent example of what I mean. While the Dome of the Rock is decidedly more ornate than the Church of the Sepulchre, it is artistic, harmonious, restrained. Everything it contains is in good taste; whereas, in the other, even precious gold contrives to wear the impression of tinsel. And while the open space before the porch of the Sepulchre is thronged with sellers of beads and medals, with money-changers and the like, people who, while of the utmost utility and worth, do not add to the majesty of a place of worship, the Haram is really a sanctuary in the true meaning of the word, the



DOME OF THE ROCK: THE CRUSADERS' GRILLE



HARAM AND ANTONIA TOWER



worthy home of a great religion. It is not altogether to be wondered at that Moslems look upon it as the spot to which on the Last Day Mohammed and Christ will come to judge the world.

All along the eastern length of the Haram runs a wall, serving as boundary to Haram and city alike, from which one looks over the valley of Jehosaphat across to the Mount of Olives. Toward its northern end is the Golden Gate, traditional scene of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, through which, during the Crusades, in memory of this event, the Patriarch would ride in solemn procession upon an ass, the people spreading their garments on the ground before his way. Between the Golden Gate and the Jami' el-'Aksa the wall extends in unbroken severity, save where the stump of an ancient column projects horizontally on either side. On the Day of Judgment, so runs the story, when Christ is sitting on the wall, and the Prophet on the mountain opposite, a single hair will be stretched from this column across the valley, over which the multitudes assembled on the Haram will have to pass. The hills will recede and the valley deepen, and the righteous will walk fearlessly across, well knowing that, if they falter, their guardian angels are ready to hold them up by their forelocks, and save them from tumbling headlong into hell which is gaping beneath. Thus will they cross until only a handful are left, who seem ill at ease, and reluctant to set foot on so narrow a bridge. Mohammed inquires why they linger, and is informed that they are the wicked Moslems, who, having now been smitten with a sense of their misdoings, and realizing that their virtue will not suffice to help them over the abyss, are await-

ing the Prophet's pleasure on this side in fear and misgiving. Mohammed looks stern, and rebukes them for their neglect of his rule and ordinances; then smiles a little to himself, and in a moment is across the bridge and among them, dressed as a shepherd and wearing a large sheepskin cloak with the woolly side turned outwards. With a wave of his hand he turns the repentant sinners into fleas. Eagerly they jump upon him, and bury themselves in the wool of his cloak; and Mohammed, laden with forgiven souls, slowly and thoughtfully recrosses the bridge, and with his burden disappears whence he came.

## CHAPTER V.

### JERUSALEM. II.

NOT far from the middle of the city, which is best defined as where the street of David intersects that of the Damascus Gate, two domes of unequal size emerge from the midst of a confused and indistinguishable cluster of buildings. They are not lofty, these domes ; but at a distance, perhaps because they are such an ill-matched pair, they never fail to attract attention. They are the domes of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre ; and they have played an appreciable part, not only in the history of that edifice, but also in the causes of the Crimean war, which began, as Kinglake says, “in the heart of Jerusalem, in the Holy Sepulchre itself.” As sign-posts, however, they are hardly adequate, since, on being approached, they vanish ; and as the Sepulchre, unlike that ever-present landmark, the Haram, chooses to seek seclusion within a labyrinth of tortuous streets, it needs a good knowledge of the intricacies of the Frank quarter to bring one to the little doors of the famous courtyard, that courtyard which forms, as it were, the lobby of the church, and alone gives access to it. For the heart and citadel of Christian Jerusalem is well guarded : no side of it is open to the street, from no place can it be seen in its

entirety. Chapels and hostels, convents and patriarchates, cling to it with limpet-like tenacity, masking its outline, and concealing from view every part of it save the two-storied, golden-brown, Romanesque façade, in whose upper windows Armenian monks can generally be seen looking down upon the lively scene below.

To one entering the Church of the Sepulchre for the first time, its sights and contents, however fully anticipated, cannot but convey a feeling of intense bewilderment. He sees vague aisles stretching away in the dim obscurity until they end in solid blackness ; he guesses at, rather than sees, mysterious chapels from which proceed strange sounds, the plaintive wailing of the wretched cripples who haunt them as it blends with the nasal chant of some quaint eastern ritual. Here are babbling Orthodox priests bustling about with an air of proprietorship, a stolid band of moujiks in their train ; there, Franciscans of the familiar western type side by side with coal-black monks from distant Abyssinia. In one corner men and women are prostrating themselves at some sacred spot in the utter abandonment of adoration, and evidently under the stress of deep emotion ; in another a cheery family is squatting on the ground, unconcernedly eating its mid-day meal. A group of European tourists passes by him, closely followed by a stately patriarchal procession, the twentieth century succeeded by the twelfth ; and, strangest of all, high up in the galleries of the big dome, the inmates of many convents are watching his movements from the windows of their bedrooms, which open into and overlook that part of the building which contains the very Sepulchre itself. The contrasts and anomalies to be met with at every turn may well amaze

even the most indifferent ; and he who would properly grasp and co-ordinate in his brain the manifold phases of this most remarkable of religious establishments, must needs return to it many times. It is misleading to call the Sepulchre a church, for it means and contains much more than is commonly understood by the word. In the first place it is a perfect example of the true mediaeval cathedral, that comprehensive scheme which included, in addition to the building actually set apart for the celebration of the liturgy, the dependent schools and orphanages, hospitals and residences, wherein religious and secular life could be lived side by side. Secondly, it is the gathering-place of every form of Catholicism, eastern and western, a home of strange races and forgotten heresies, a very Babel of Christianity in which Armenian and Jacobite, Copt and Abyssinian, have their place as well as Latin and Orthodox. Thirdly, it is the incorporation, under a single roof, of many churches, commemorating many sites. In his *Life of Constantine* Eusebius of Caesarea describes how "contrary to all expectation" the tomb of the Saviour was discovered in the reign of that Emperor "beneath a gloomy shrine of lifeless idols to the impure spirit whom they (certain impious and godless persons) call Venus." At about the same time Constantine's mother Helena, then on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, found the True Cross at a spot near by. Over the sites of these discoveries two churches were erected close to each other, and close to a small hill which was already being venerated as the scene of the Crucifixion. Chosroes the Persian destroyed them in the beginning of the seventh century ; and when, soon after, they were rebuilt, a church of Calvary arose beside them, followed

in course of time by several other religious edifices. The little group of holy places thus brought into being suffered many vicissitudes in the ensuing centuries, was twice damaged by fire and once by Moslems, was rebuilt and was again destroyed, this time by the Crusaders, who thought that sites of such sanctity were deserving of worthier housing. But instead of re-erecting a number of separate churches, they proceeded to enclose within the walls of one large Romanesque building almost every locality connected with the last scenes of our Lord's Passion. It is this building which, subject to many changes and additions, exists to-day, although from without only the façade is visible. A triple row of convents encircles it on every other side, invaded in places by its outlying chapels and sanctuaries, in others throwing out, octopus-like, wings and passages, corridors and refectories, into its innermost recesses. It is a world in itself, self-contained and self-sufficient. Hundreds live within its walls ; and it can well be believed that not a few of these have, for a generation or more, never quitted its precincts except to watch, now and again, for an hour or so, the busy chaffering and motley crowd in the courtyard outside.

The courtyard is bounded on either side by monasteries, principally Orthodox, and of no great beauty or interest, except that in one is the Sepulchre *pied à terre* of the Church of England. In the north-east corner, however, a small two-storied chapel projects picturesquely, its arches modelled on those of the façade. At the foot of the steps which lead up to it, and level with the flags which pave the court, lies an interesting relic, the tombstone of an English knight, Philip d'Aubigny,



COURTYARD, HOLY SEPULCHRE

Facing p. 92.



only survivor of the numerous Crusading memorials banished by the intolerance of the Greeks. Fortunately the porch has been preserved from vandalism ; its bas-reliefs are admirable examples of the transition from Romanesque to Gothic sculpture, and depict the entry into Jerusalem and the raising of Lazarus with the naïf realism of the twelfth century craftsman (who was then also artist). Within the porch are stationed officious Greek priests, who endeavour by their ostentatious demeanour to show that theirs is the preponderance in this cosmopolitan encampment; behind them is a small group of men, silent and unobtrusive, whose presence they suffer unwillingly, although without them they would many a time have come to grief. These are the Turkish guardians of the Sepulchre, members of an ancient and aristocratic institution, who, in an unusually difficult position, maintain the courteous dignity of their race. Day by day they sit smoking their *narghiles* on a low wooden platform, and take no notice of the crowd as it comes and goes save to answer an inquiry or to return a greeting. In times of turmoil, however, it was different : there have been days when strife was frequent between the rival sects within the Sepulchre, and when the firm hand of the Moslem was constantly required to keep the Christians from each other's throats. Now, happily, things have changed for the better ; and when, not very long ago, in the house of the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, the Chief Qadi presented the Chief Rabbi to the recently-appointed Latin Patriarch with the words : "Here is the *Qoran* introducing the Old Testament to the New," it was a sign that the bitter religious animosity for which Jerusalem had long been a byword was beginning to die out.

As one enters the church by the vestibule of the Turkish guards, one encounters an object which, while of no great intrinsic interest, should not be passed by unnoticed, because it illustrates very markedly two of the Sepulchre's most characteristic features. It is a large, oblong slab of pink marble, set in the ground, and surrounded by a garland of heavy silver hanging lamps. It was brought here in the beginning of last century to replace another stone which, together with a great part of the building, was destroyed in the disastrous fire of 1808, and had been revered, in succession to several others, as the 'Stone of Unction' on which Nicodemus is said to have laid the body of Jesus when he anointed it for burial. It is always surrounded by pilgrims, who reverently kiss it, touch it with their foreheads, lay rosaries upon it, and clearly regard it as a very holy thing. It is not my purpose to discuss the vexed question of the authenticity of the Holy Sepulchre. For centuries it has been regarded as the place where our Lord's body was laid to rest ; and, in the absence of any conclusive proof to the contrary, it would be presumptuous to dismiss as superstitious or unthinking the devotion of the hundreds of thousands who look upon it as the most sacred spot upon earth. But it cannot be denied that in the course of years the influence of the priests of the Sepulchre has been used to invest in the minds of the pilgrims a number of less accepted sites and relics with similar, if not equal sanctity ; and the devoted pilgrims, always glad of additional calls upon their piety, have accepted, with a lack of discernment for which no man can blame them, whatever their clergy have told them. A seventeenth-century traveller catalogues with astonishment the number of " places conse-

cated to a more than ordinary veneration, by being reputed to have some particular actions done in them relating to the death and resurrection of Christ—as, first, the place where He was derided by the soldiers; secondly, where the soldiers divided His garments; thirdly, where He was shut up whilst they digged the hole to set the foot of the cross in, and made all ready for His crucifixion; fourthly, where He was nailed to the cross; fifthly, where the cross was erected; sixthly, where the soldiers stood that pierced His side; seventhly, where His body was anointed in order to His burial; eighthly, where His body was deposited in the Sepulchre; ninthly, where the angels appeared to the women after His resurrection; where Christ Himself appeared to Mary Magdalen, etc. The places where these and many other things relating to our blessed Lord are said to have been done, are all supposed to be contained within the narrow precincts of this church, and are all distinguished and adorned with so many several altars.” The result of this process is seen to-day in the veneration accorded to a number of ill-authenticated objects, not the least among which is the Stone of Unction. The reverence lavished on that relic, which was placed in its present position not much more than a hundred years ago, is a good example of the lengths to which the pilgrims’ simple faith will go.

The second characteristic is the mathematical precision with which are defined, in accordance with numerous compromises, agreements, and treaties, the position, the rights, and the property of the Sepulchre’s component nationalities. Although the Latins rebuilt the Sepulchre unaided, they were not long left in sole possession. One after another the representatives of

other churches began to struggle for a foothold within it. The first to come were the Greeks, who were followed in rapid succession by Jacobites, Armenians, Nestorians, Maronites, Copts, Abyssinians, and Georgians. To all of these definite quarters were assigned, and all paid a considerable rent to the Mohammedan masters of Jerusalem, which seems to have become, after a while, too great a strain on the resources of the poorer among them. The Nestorians have long since disappeared, and the Maronites withdrew during the troubles which beset their native Lebanon in the middle of the last century. The Georgians ceased to be represented separately when that interesting people was conquered by the Russians; and the Jacobites appear to leave their chapel empty and untended. When Henry Maundrell, sometime Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, and chaplain to the English Factory at Aleppo, visited Jerusalem in 1697, he found that the Copts, whom he calls Cophtites, had "only one poor representative of their nation left," and that the Armenians "are run so much in debt that it is supposed they are hastening apace to follow the example of their brethren, who have deserted before them." Oddly enough, the good Maundrell's anticipations have not been fulfilled, for since his time both Copts and Armenians have revived considerably. The Coptic colony to-day is small but solvent, and the Armenians are now as firmly established as either the Latins or the Greeks. The two latter are, of course, the principal partners, and the many battles of the Sepulchre have been fought partly to assure this position against their weaker brethren, partly to contest for the primacy between themselves; although in justice to the Latins it

must be stated that the aggressors have almost invariably been the Greeks. By now, however, the respective domains of all have been carefully mapped out. The courtyard, the porch, and the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre are common property; and the remaining items have been divided among the six Churches in proportion to the ability of those who originally had them to maintain their hold. And the regulations governing those parts which are held in common are a study in minute elaboration. The hours at which mass according to the different rites may be said in the chapel of the Sepulchre are rigidly fixed and time-tabled, as are the times when processions may defile around it. Rules devised with an ingenuity well worthy of Greek theologians exist for every purpose, and for every place; but nowhere can the extent to which detail is pursued be seen better than in the Stone of Unction, where tradition, now codified into unbreakable law, lays down how many lamps shall burn above it, and by whom, and in what proportions, they shall be owned.

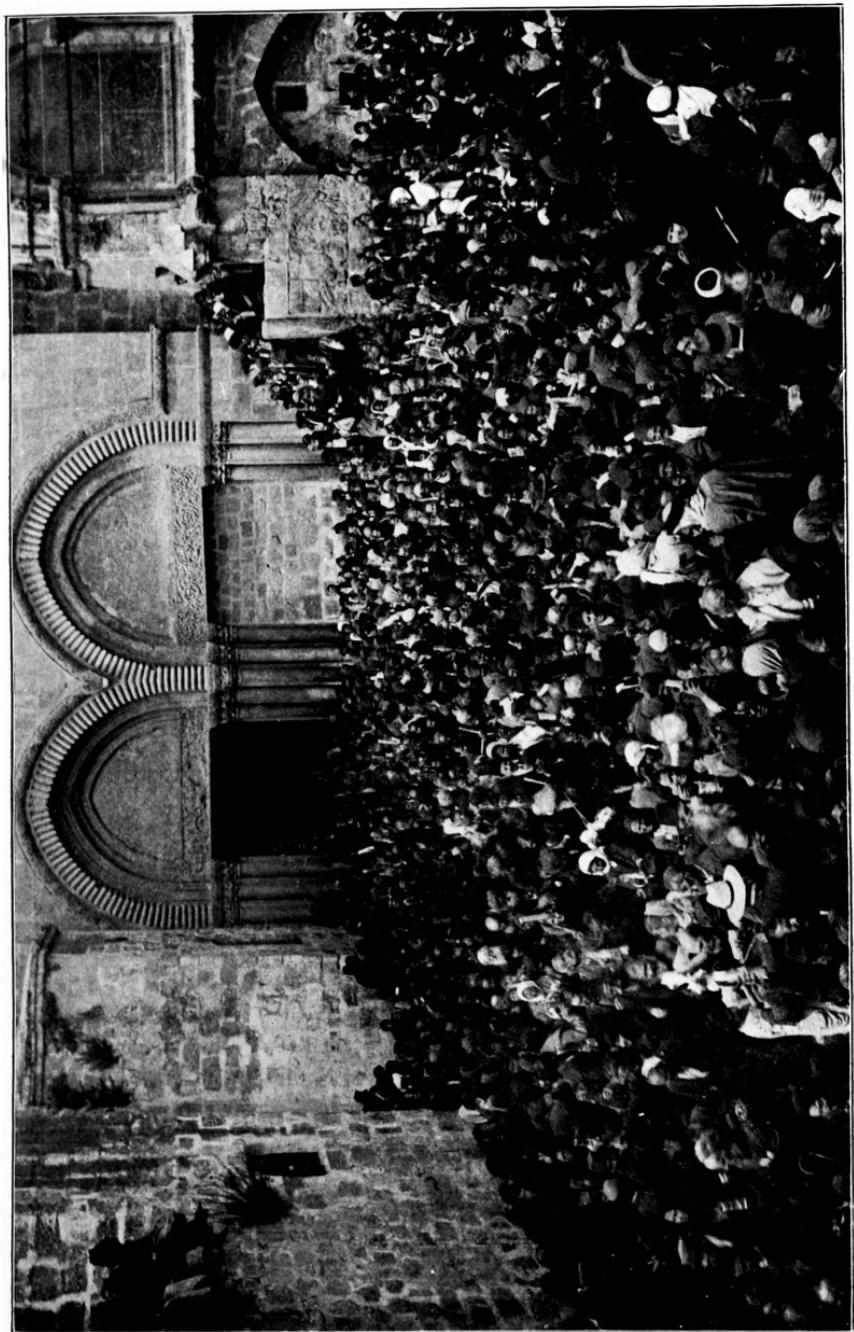
Lamps also play an important part in the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. This chapel is to the church what the Sakhra is to the Dome of the Rock. It stands alone in the middle of the Rotunda (a circular edifice which, together with the adjoining large rectangular building, now the Cathedral of the Greeks, formed the principal part of the Crusaders' church), and consists of two small chambers. The first to be entered is called the Angels' chapel, and from it a low door gives access to the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre properly so-called, in which the tomb-stone itself, concealed from the earliest times beneath slabs of marble,

serves as altar. In both, nearly all the available space is taken up by rows of beautiful and massive silver lamps, which make the air heavy with the scent of their perfumed oil. Both rooms are so tiny that they will barely contain more than three or four people at a time; and the Orthodox monk who sells candles at the entrance often finds himself compelled to cut short with marked lack of ceremony the devotions of those who would linger within longer than is compatible with the exigencies of his trade.

At the Greek Easter this chapel is the scene of what is known as the miracle of the Holy Fire, one of the most ancient and most remarkable ceremonies of the Christian Church. On Easter Eve all the clergy of the Sepulchre, by common consent, expedite their offices so as to leave the Rotunda entirely in the hands of the Greeks,<sup>1</sup> who, bearing aloft their banners, begin to move round it in long and slow procession. The Russian Consul is there, supported by his Cossack gavasses, and at the end is borne the Patriarch, who moves three times round the chapel, and then enters alone. All lights are extinguished, and the dense crowd, which has been in the church since the previous evening, awaits the miracle in feverish suspense. Suddenly a shout is heard. A brand lit by the fire which has come down from heaven is being pushed by a shaking hand through one of the windows of the chapel, and a frenzied rush is made by the crowd, each one trying desperately to be the first to light his taper from it, and thus ensure his eternal salvation. In the indescribable

<sup>1</sup> For centuries the Armenians participated with the Greeks in the celebration of the miracle, but, after a long period of hesitation, they some years ago committed themselves definitely against it.

THE HOLY FIRE





tumult which follows, people are trampled under foot unmercifully ; and only those run no risk of being killed who are watching from the galleries above. Curzon, in his *Visits to the Monasteries of the Levant*, gives a vivid description of the performance of the miracle on the disastrous Easter of 1834, in the presence of Ibrâhîm Pasha, then fresh from his victories against the Turks. 17,000 pilgrims were supposed to be in Jerusalem at the time, and the crowd within the church was almost unprecedented. Ibrâhîm was accommodated in the gallery of the Franciscan convent, "and it being announced that the Mohammedan Pasha was ready, the Christian miracle, which had been waiting for some time, was now on the point of being displayed."

Owing to the delay which had taken place, the people were more than usually excited ; and after the miracle had been performed, and the Patriarch had been carried out of the chapel in the simulated state of semi-consciousness affected on these occasions "that the pilgrims may imagine he is overcome with the glory of the Almighty, from whose immediate presence they believe him to have returned," pandemonium broke loose. The panic increased when the guards outside, thinking that the Christians intended an attack on them, rushed into the church, and began to use their bayonets. Three hundred, says Curzon, were carried to their burial the next morning, and two hundred more were badly wounded. Ibrâhîm himself barely escaped with his life. Even in the galleries all was not well : "Three unhappy people, overcome by heat and bad air, fell from the upper range of galleries, and were dashed to pieces on the heads of the people below. One poor Armenian

lady, seventeen years of age, died where she sat, of heat, thirst, and fatigue."

Probably neither before nor since have the numbers of dead and wounded on that occasion been equalled or even approached. A limited number of casualties is, however, almost always inevitable; and as the miracle has been practised since the ninth century, and possibly even earlier, it must have caused, in the course of its history, a very considerable loss of life. The first description of it, given by the Breton monk, Bernard the Wise, in 867, states that "an angel comes and lights the lamps which hang over the aforesaid sepulchre ; of which light the patriarch gives their shares to the bishops and to the rest of the people, that each may illuminate his own house." One hundred and forty years later its practice involved the Christians of Jerusalem in great disaster. A certain monk named John, having been refused consecration as Bishop by the Patriarch, and desiring to be revenged, presented himself in Cairo before Khalif Hâkim, then at the height of his madness, and told him that "when the Christians assembled in their temple at Jerusalem, to celebrate Easter, the chaplains of the church, making use of a pious fraud, greased the chain of iron that held the lamp over the tomb with oil of balsam ; and that, when the Arab officer had sealed up the door which led to the tomb, they applied a match, through the roof, to the other extremity of the chain, and the fire descended immediately to the wick of the lamp and lighted it. Then the worshippers burst into tears and cried out *kyrie eleison*, supposing it was fire which fell from heaven upon the tomb ; and they were thus strengthened in their faith." He also accused his enemy, the Patriarch,

of trying to usurp the Khalif's authority ; whereupon Hâkim gave orders for the Church of the Sepulchre to be destroyed, and the Patriarch to be arrested. As for the monk John, his subsequent career is not recorded ; but when, shortly before his death, Hâkim relented toward the Christians, one may well imagine the Khalif's playful fancy devising for the would-be Bishop some not inappropriate reward.

Another and greater eastern king is also connected with the Holy Fire. On Easter Eve, 1192, " Saladin, with his retinue, paid a visit to the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord, to assure himself of the truth of a certain fact, namely, the coming down from heaven of fire, once a year, to light the lamp. After he had watched for some time, with great attention, the devotion and contrition of many Christian captives, who were praying for the mercy of God, he and all the other Turks suddenly saw the divine fire descend and light the lamp, so that they were vehemently moved, while the Christians rejoiced, and with loud voices praised the mighty works of God. But the Saracens disbelieved this manifest and wonderful miracle, though they witnessed it with their own eyes, and asserted that it was a fraudulent contrivance. To assure himself of this, Saladin ordered the lamp to be extinguished ; which, however, was instantly rekindled by the divine power : and when the infidel ordered it to be extinguished a second time it was lighted a second time ; and so likewise a third time."

" God is all-patient," continues the chronicler ; " of what use is it to fight against the invincible power ? There is no counsel against God, nor is there any one who can resist His will. Saladin, wondering at this

miraculous vision, and the faith and devotion of the Christians, and exceedingly moved, asserted by the spirit of prophecy, that he should either die or lose possession of the city of Jerusalem. And his prophecy was fulfilled ; for he died the Lent following."<sup>1</sup>

To describe fully all that the Church of the Sepulchre contains would require a volume. Of the chapels of Calvary, a flight of steps above the floor of the church, it will suffice to say that they are a blaze of gold, silver, and mosaic ; of the chapel of St. Helena, a flight below, sombre and bare, with its curious dome and massive columns, that it is a worthy specimen of Byzantine austerity. But pass through the Greek patriarchate and on the roof of the church, and you will see a strange and unexpected sight. Below you is a large stone court or platform, in the middle of which rises an object somewhat resembling the up-turned half of an egg. Around the sides of the platform are some hut-like excrescences from which small black objects can occasionally be seen to emerge ; similar small black objects are scattered about the court, some in the corners, others against the up-turned egg in the middle. It is some time before you realize the significance of the scene. The court is no less than the flat roof of St. Helena's chapel, and the thing in the middle its projecting dome. The small black objects are Abyssinian monks, who have chosen this, of all places, for their humble abode. Around the sides they have erected huts of the most primitive kind ; and here these gentle, timid, and unassuming people spend their time laboriously deciphering the books of their scanty library. They are very poor, and live principally on flat bread

<sup>1</sup> *Itinerarium regis Ricardi*, v., xvi.



CHAPEL OF ST. HELENA



THE ABYSSINIAN MONASTERY ON THE ROOF OF ST. HELENA'S CHAPEL



and water ; most of them go barefooted ; and their dress consists of nothing more than the usual rimless high hat and a tunic of washleather or black cloth, encased by a broad belt. On feast-days, however, they sometimes emerge from their retreat to indulge in the dissipation of an ecclesiastical procession. Arrayed in a variety of vestments, mostly presented by sympathetic visitors, and emitting strange noises, they dance round in circles to the beating of cymbals ; finally, they repair to one of the chapels assigned to them inside the Sepulchre, where, at an altar laden with icons depicting black-faced saints, they proceed to the celebration of their service. God and His angels and all His saints, they firmly believe, are black ; and They figure in their illuminated manuscripts, some of which are of the greatest interest, with complexions of brownish red. Maundeville's description of the Abyssinians is sufficiently amusing to be worth quoting : "In Ethiopia," he says, "all the rivers and waters are troubled, and somewhat salt, for the great heat that is there. And the people of that country are easily intoxicated, and have but little appetite for meat. And they are afflicted with dysenteries and live not long. In Ethiopia the children, when young, are all yellow ; and when they grow older that yellowness turns to black." In addition to their roof-convent, the Abyssinians have another settlement in the suburbs, outside the walls ; and here, too, is the house, known to the irreverent as the "Palace of the Queen of Sheba," which was built for the Empress Taitu, wife of Menelik, when she proposed to visit Jerusalem a few years ago.

As it is in this quarter that the hospices and other establishments of the principal European missions are

situated, it may be well to give some account of these, and, what is more important, of the politics they practise. Jerusalem politics are almost entirely religious—that is to say, they are concerned with the efforts of Russia, France, and, to a lesser degree, of Prussia, to establish their influence in Palestine by means of religious propaganda. The first to enjoy the position of the most-favoured nation were undoubtedly the French. From the Crusading days of *gesta dei per francos* to the sixties of the last century, when Napoleon III. sent troops to protect the Christians in Syria after the massacres in Damascus, France claimed to be the guardian of Roman Catholic interests in the East, and even now hesitates to abandon that position. French anti-clerical policy, initiated at the French Revolution, partially approved by Napoleon I., passionately advocated by Gambetta, and culminating in the Combes-Briand measures, has naturally detracted somewhat from the potency of this claim, although Gambetta's celebrated war-cry, "*Le cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi,*" was admittedly only for home consumption. At important Roman Catholic functions Italian Consuls have now taken the place of French ; and the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, an Italian, dispenses, as a rule, with French intervention in his dealings with the Ottoman Government.<sup>1</sup>

Very different is the policy of Russia. The Russian Government wisely sees that in the simple piety of its vast peasant population it possesses a most valuable

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that among the rights inherited by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, as successor to the "Custodian of the Holy Land," is that of maintaining a merchant marine flying his own flag (*cf.* Young, *Corps de Droit Ottoman*, Vol. II.). This flag, argent a cross potent between four crosses gules, was flown by Christian-owned Cypriot vessels prior to the British occupation.

political asset. Every year thousands of pilgrims from all parts of Russia leave Odessa for the Holy Land ; and as they are helpless and unused to travel, what is more natural than that a paternal Government should take steps to provide for their comfort and accommodation ? On the brow of an eminence to the north-west of the city was once the Crusaders' encampment, whence the knights were wont to descend "*à grand vacarme de timbales et de nacaires*"; now its place is taken by the encampment of a nation whose ambitions in the East are pursued with equal enterprise. A large consulate, larger cathedral, several barrack-like hospices<sup>1</sup> capable of holding the population of a small town, together with hospital, dispensary, priests' quarters, and mission-house, make a formidable outpost, when backed by a ready flow of money and a constant stream of men. Every moujik who comes to Palestine with the hard-earned savings of a lifetime, carefully put by for the happy day when, by the grace of God, he will be allowed to offer them up at the Holy Places, is by reason of his blind and ardent faith a perfectly disciplined soldier, enriching the institutions, and increasing the prestige of his country. He comes in his thousands, year by year, walking from Jaffa, that he may have the more to give to the wealthy convents in and around Jerusalem. There are several such on the road to Jericho, and in each one that he visits he will leave five, ten, and sometimes twenty roubles, much for a man who in a lifetime has only saved three hundred.

<sup>1</sup> The pilgrims are not accommodated free, but pay so much a day for board and lodging. There are three types of hospice, one for the well-to-do, one for those of moderate means, and one for the poor, and the charges vary accordingly.

It cannot justly be said that he is exploited, because to give to those who minister at Gospel sites is his greatest joy. Watch him in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with his awkward but fervent gestures, with a look of ardent faith illuminating what might otherwise seem a dull and heavy countenance, and compare the desperate earnestness of his prayers with the more perfunctory devotions of the sprightlier Greek.

These people are not trained in the cold, intellectual religion of the reformed North. At the cost of great privations, in the face of countless difficulties, with much quiet heroism and endurance, they painfully wend their way to the Holy City, bent on seeing with their own eyes, on touching with their own hands, things which their Saviour has seen and touched, and happy if they are allowed to die in the place hallowed by His crucifixion. What matter if the priests be unworthy and the shrines a fraud? Faith such as theirs, if it is not, perhaps, the most reasoning form of Christianity, is certainly worthy of all respect. One may sometimes be inclined to smile at the simplicity with which they believe whatever they are told or shown ; but when one has seen them, on arrival in Jerusalem after the forty-mile march from Jaffa, stand around in a circle and sing, in beautiful harmony, a hymn of thanksgiving, before they think of rest, one cannot but admire the spirit which animates these poor, uneducated people, people who do not understand the *Filioque* clause or the decisions of the Council of Nice, but who show, by their joyful sacrifice of all they possess, that they understand the meaning of true religion.

Such, then, is the material of Russia for her new Crusade. The number of Russian institutions in the

Holy Land is growing day by day, and there is no danger of their being allowed to suffer from want of financial support. Russia, to use a colloquialism, "does things well." Her Consuls are well paid, and supplied with an imposing escort; her Archimandrite has a large ecclesiastical suite, fully in keeping with Jerusalem traditions;<sup>1</sup> her pilgrim colony is patrolled by a small regiment of stalwart Montenegrin guards, kept solely for the purpose. But stronger than any outward manifestation of wealth or power is the moral force underlying the pilgrim movement. There is no more touching episode in the history of the middle ages than that which is known as the Children's Crusade. A band of children, impelled by crusading enthusiasm, left their homes, determined to fight for the redemption of the Holy Land; and no remonstrances were able to hold them back. Young and helpless, they fell into evil hands, and not one of them ever reached his destination. The Russian peasant to-day, in many ways still a child, is moved by much the same spirit as were the infants who streamed to Marseilles and Genoa to the war-cry of "Lord Jesus, give us back the Holy Cross" seven hundred years ago. It is a spirit which has done much in the past, and which can do much in the future. If properly handled, it may become a very formidable power; and there is reason to believe that Russia realizes to the full the value of the lever which she possesses.

Of the other nationalities, not much remains to be said. The Armenian colony is large and flourishing,

<sup>1</sup> Every Patriarch has a suite of titular Bishops, or *matrants*, attached to him, whose sole function it is to enhance his dignity by their presence. The more important the Patriarch, the greater the number of his *matrants*.

but little seen outside its own quarter. The establishments of the two great Catholic powers, Austria and Italy, are exclusively religious, and make no attempt to acquire political influence. The Anglican collegiate church and college are a dignified and attractive group, and England is also represented by the ophthalmic hospital of the English Knights of St. John. Protestant Germany, owing largely to the energy of William II., is rather more in evidence, possessing, besides several smaller institutions, the large Church of the Redeemer, built on land once the property of the Hospitallers, and presented to Prussia by the Sultan in 1869. It somewhat overshadows the Church of the Sepulchre, which is only a few yards away ; but from the summit of its tower, better than anywhere else, you can see the grey old city lying spread at your feet, and the grey old hills of Judaea fading away into the mists beyond.

Every Friday afternoon and Saturday morning throughout the year there can be witnessed in Jerusalem, and has been witnessed for many centuries, a scene such as only the unchanging East and one of the most unchanging of its peoples can supply. On these days there is an air of unwonted animation in the streets. Many strangely and sumptuously clad persons are about, some wearing kaftans of bright blue or purple velvet, and large fur-encircled hats, others the conventional Syrian dress, but with a black turban tied round the fez. All seem to be wending their way in the same direction, and many carry old and well-thumbed volumes which have the appearance of books of prayer. The Jews of Jerusalem are going to wail.

Everybody has heard of the Wailing of the Jews, and many, no doubt, have been inclined to laugh at the somewhat grotesque vision which such an appellation calls forth.

The appellation perfectly describes what occurs ; but any comic element which the name evokes is dispelled the moment the thing is seen.

Imagine a long and narrow *cul-de-sac*, against one of the walls of which, an ancient and massive wall, a row of men and women are gently beating their heads, while one of their number intones a verse, to which the rest reply in chorus. This constitutes the entire ceremony as far as the physical acts of the participants are concerned ; it is in their motives that its full significance lies.

Since the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, the Jews have been strangers in their own land and city. Most of them were scattered abroad at the Roman conquest, and the few who remained were only kept on sufferance. They were disliked by all, protected by none. Their Temple, the visible embodiment of Judaism, was destroyed, and its site devoted to the housing of other faiths. To this day access to the Haram is denied them, although they do not look upon this as a hardship ; as no Jew, even were he permitted to do so, would dare to set his foot within the enclosure, lest he should tread on the spot where the Holy of Holies once stood. But whether in exile at home or abroad, the Jews have retained their devotion to Jerusalem and to its Temple, a devotion which years seem to have intensified rather than diminished. Every week those who dwell in Jerusalem come to this wall, all that is left to them of their ancient habitations, to weep over the fall

of Zion, to make atonement for the sins of their fathers, and to pray that the hope to which they cling with such tenacity may some day see fulfilment. Let it not be thought that in doing this they only go through an empty form. Their tears are genuine, their self-abasement deep. Indifferent to the ribald comments of the curious, unconscious of everything but the grief which weighs so heavily upon them, a national grief which is also a personal one, they kiss the stones which hide their Temple from them ; and utter, in this admirable dialogue, the distressful cry of a captive and repentant people :

LEADER : For the palace that lies desolate :

PEOPLE : We sit in solitude and mourn.

LEADER : For the walls that are overthrown :

PEOPLE : We sit in solitude and mourn.

LEADER : For our majesty that is departed :

PEOPLE : We sit in solitude and mourn.

LEADER : For our great men who lie dead :

PEOPLE : We sit in solitude and mourn.

LEADER : For the priests who have stumbled :

PEOPLE : We sit in solitude and mourn.

LEADER : For our kings who have despised Him :

PEOPLE : We sit in solitude and mourn.

Rembrandt should have painted them, leaning against their beloved wall, a line of brilliantly dressed and bent old men, stroking its surface with gnarled and crooked fingers, and caressing its stones with trembling lips. All cupidity and malice have left their poor old eyes, which are only filled with tears ; but for this, one can almost imagine that one is watching the Scribes and Pharisees, the Rabbis and the members of the Sanhedrin of old. I chanced to be present one day when an old man of this type, of humble means and ignorant of



WAILING OF THE JEWS



English, entered a ticket office in London accompanied by a friend, through whom he asked the clerk for a passage to Jerusalem. The interpreter explained how the old man, feeling that the end of his days was near, was undertaking this journey that he might die in the land of his fathers. Most of the Jews now in Palestine have come there within recent years; many with a similar purpose, others, more enterprising, determined to live and thrive in the land which they hope may yet again be theirs. Jews now form nearly two-thirds of the population of Jerusalem, and are divided into two principal groups. The Ashkenazim come from Northern and Central Europe—Germany, Austria, Poland, Russia, Rumania. They speak Yiddish, adorn the sides of their faces with those corkscrew curls without which no Shylock is complete, and present a squalid appearance except when, on feast-days, they don their velvet robes and fur-bound bonnets. The Sephardim, or Spanish Jews, are of a higher type, and can always be distinguished in Palestine by the black turban which they wind around the fez. Now and then, too, but not often, one meets a few of those interesting people, the Jews of the Yemen, who disclaim all responsibility for the Crucifixion by asserting that they went from Babylon direct into Arabia. Entirely shaven save for the sidelocks, they have acquired in a large measure the type of the Arab of the desert. Like them, they are divided into tribes, nomadic, vigorous, and wild; and gave, in the days of Mohammed and his immediate successors, and possibly give still, much trouble to their Beduin neighbours. But they are not characteristic of Jerusalem. It is the others, those old men of indomitable devotion to the faith and city of their fathers, who are

the true Jews of Jerusalem, those who will not enter the Haram, but weekly weep outside, like Rachel who would not be comforted, those in whose hearts is ever present the mingled lament and prayer :

“Oh that the salvation were given unto Israel out of Sion :  
oh that the Lord would deliver his people out of captivity !

Then should Jacob rejoice and Israel should be right glad.”

## BRIEF NOTE ON THE EASTERN CHURCHES.

The foundations of the Holy Orthodox Eastern Church, and the sources from which all eastern Churches, both orthodox and heretical, have sprung, are the four ancient Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. The four Patriarchs, among whom the Patriarch of Constantinople, or Oecumenical (*i.e.* Universal) Patriarch, ranks as *primus inter pares*, compose the ultimate and supreme governing body of the Orthodox Church as a whole ; but to all intents and purposes they are the rulers of separate Churches in full communion with each other, and only take joint action in very exceptional cases, as, for example, in the archiepiscopal dispute in Cyprus. Together with their offshoots they form the thirty-one independent Churches into which eastern Christendom has split. Their twenty-seven offshoots may be divided into three classes :

- (i) Churches in communion with the Patriarchates, and hence members of the Holy Orthodox Eastern Church, having the rank of ‘autocephalous and isotimous Churches’ ;
- (ii) Heretical Churches, *i.e.* Churches not in communion with the Patriarchates ;
- (iii) Uniat Churches.

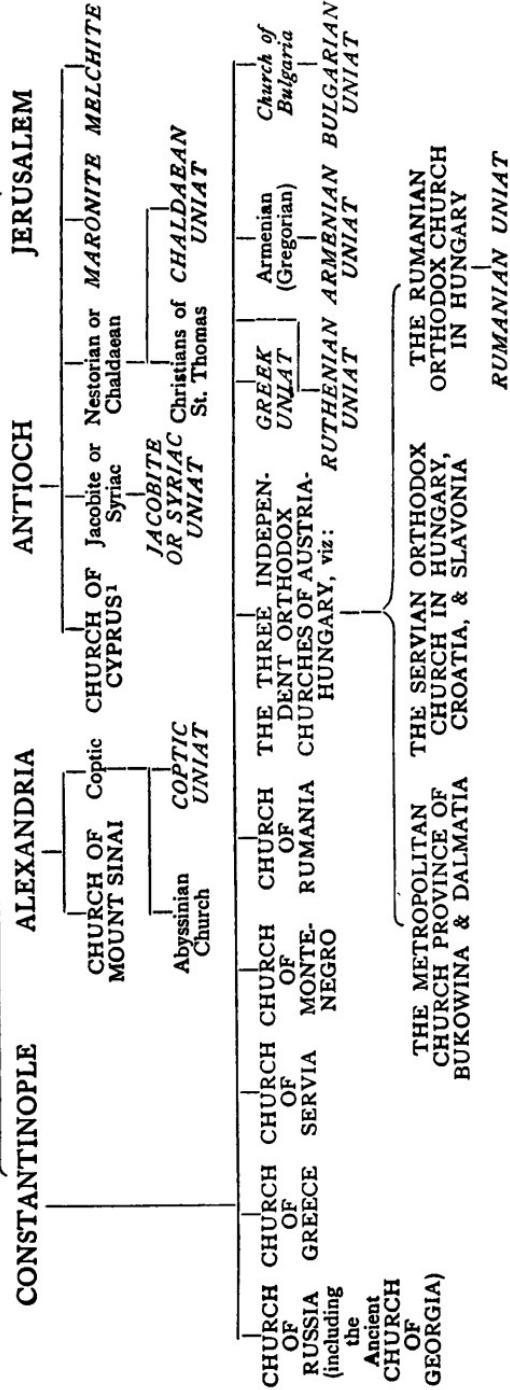
The Church of the Bulgarian Exarchate forms a category of its own, for while doctrinally in full communion with the Patriarchates, it is excommunicated on political grounds.

The majority of the ‘autocephalous and isotimous’ Churches are the national Churches of countries which were formerly provinces of the Turkish Empire. Under the Turkish régime the Patriarch of Constantinople exercised ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but, as the provinces obtained their independence of the Sultan, the Churches demanded theirs of the Patriarch, who granted it, as a rule, only under compulsion and with reluctance.

From some of the orthodox, and from all of the heretical Churches there have seceded branches which, while retaining in varying degrees their former constitutions, discipline, and rites, acknowledge the general supremacy of the Pope. They are called Uniat Churches, and are in communion with the Church of Rome.

Perhaps the genealogical table will help to make clear a complicated situation.

**THE FOUR PATRIARCHATES OF THE HOLY ORTHODOX EASTERN CHURCH**



**EXPLANATION**

IN CAPITAL LETTERS	ORTHODOX CHURCHES
In small letters . . .	Heretical Churches
IN CAPITAL ITALICS . . .	UNIAT CHURCHES
In small italics . . .	Schismatic Church

<sup>1</sup>Although the Patriarchs of Antioch claimed authority over the Church of Cyprus until it was formally declared independent by the Emperor Zeno, the evidence would seem to be in favour of it having been independent since its foundation by SS. Paul and Barnabas.

## CHAPTER VI.

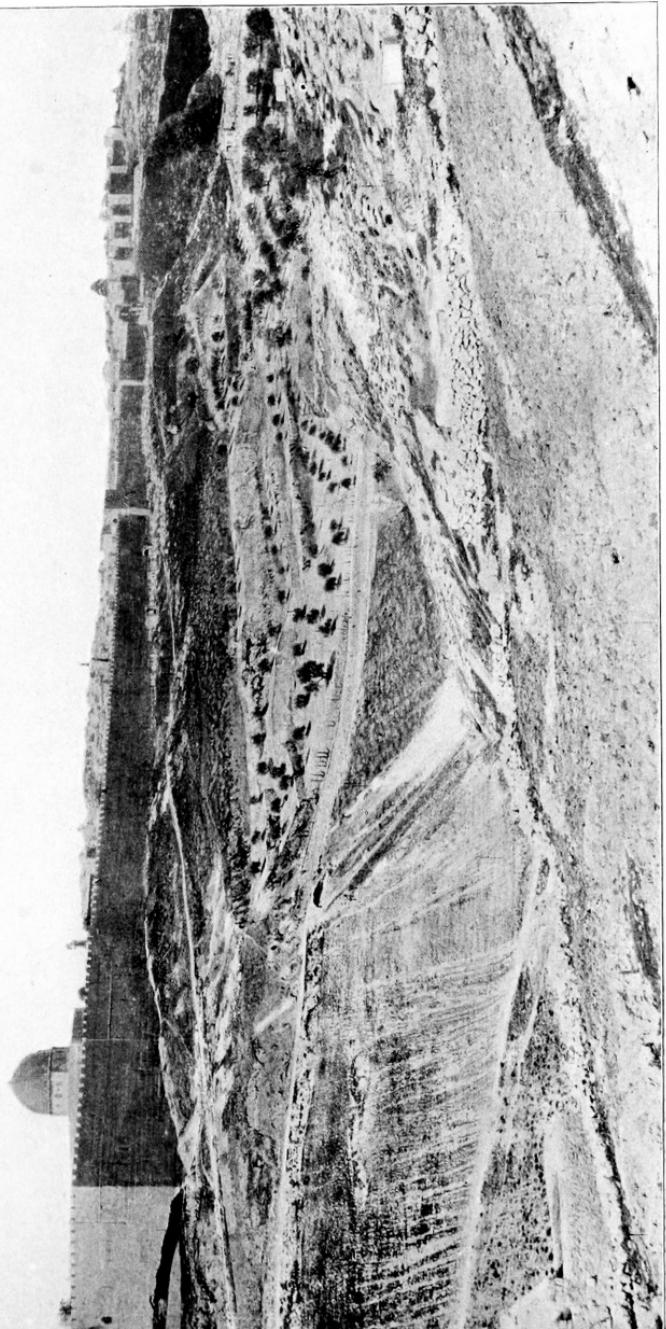
### JUDAEA: THE SAMARITANS.

IN Jerusalem we procured tents, servants, and horses for our journey northward ; and, while all things were being got into readiness, we made the pilgrimage to Jericho and the Dead Sea. A carriage road leaves Jerusalem, crosses the valley of Hinnom, and winds gently up the slope of the Mount of Olives, whence you see, at its very best, the eastern flank of the Haram esh-Sherif. The ridge once crossed, the road makes a bend to the east, passes Bethany, now a poor Moslem village which lives by the tomb of Lazarus and the house of Mary and Martha, and then follows a succession of ravines through the barren hills as they gradually descend into the Jordan valley. The scenery becomes more interesting as the road approaches the precipitous Wâdi el-Kelt, upon one of whose walls of deep red rock a monastery finds picturesque but precarious foot-hold. This monastery, dedicated to that favourite of Christians and Moslems alike, St. George, is anything but a popular resort of the monastic community of Jerusalem. It is, in fact, a penitentiary for the refractory and weaker brethren ; and upon their discipline its wild and desolate environment is said to have a most improving effect. Three miles beyond St. George the

road and the Wâdi el-Kelt together enter el-Ghor, the lower Jordan valley, and here the road ends at the miserable village of Jericho, a hot, decayed, and squalid little place entirely devoid of merit. The remains of Old Testament Jericho lie about a mile to the north, and behind them the Jebel Qarantal rises, bare and grim, on the further side of the Wâdi el-Kelt. The forbidding aspect of this gloomy peak well justifies the old belief that on its heights our Lord spent the forty days of His temptation in the wilderness. Qarantal is a corruption of the mediaeval name Quarantana, and in the early days of Christianity the mountain was a favourite resort of hermits. High up on its precipitous face can still be seen the remains of their strange dwellings, so situated that one marvels how they ever reached them, and feels certain that, once there, they could never again come down. Their larders must often, I fear, have been empty, since their retreats were but caves protected by a rough sort of balcony, with neither space nor soil for the poorest of kitchen gardens; indeed, the sole amenity of their lives would appear to have lain in the view which they enjoyed of that remarkable region, el-Ghor.

Lying between the mountains of Judaea on the west, and the mountains of Ammon on the east, and bisected by the river Jordan, el-Ghor is composed of two strikingly different types of country. The land adjoining the river on either side is an arid desert of clay, full of deep fissures, without a trace of vegetation except at the river's marge, and in rain a veritable sea of slime; that at the foot of the hills is among the most fertile parts of all Palestine. The Jordan, concealed along most of its lower course by a border of poplars,

JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES





tamarisks, and willows, flows muddily but swiftly through the middle of it, and some six miles south-east of Jericho empties itself into the Dead Sea. Thither we drove while the wind was howling a thousand feet above the sweltering hollow, halting on the way at the Orthodox monastery of St. Gerasimos. Another hour's drive brought us to the strange sea which is at the lowest depth of the earth's surface; and we bathed in the brine of what the Arab has named Bahr Lut, the Lake of Lot, "salt, wild, all-swallowing, and stinking." Its taste is vile, and deadly to all fish; but its banks possess a solemn beauty which it is right that one should find by the Sea which is called Dead. As far as the eye can see, the mountains rise almost sheer from the water, wrapped in a nebulous haze, the product of much evaporation; they are lined and furrowed by a hundred wâdis, which in winter become a hundred torrents, and in summer as many dry and thirsty gullies.

Lying high and dry upon the beach off which we bathed we noticed a small vessel of uncertain age and in very indifferent condition. Surprised to find a craft of any description here, we decided to inquire about it of the first intelligent person whom we should encounter on our return. This proved to be the Abbot of a monastery which appeared to go by the name of the Castle of the Jews, although its proper designation is the monastery of St. John. Like St. Gerasimos, this monastery is of ancient origin; but only a chapel partly hewn in the rock, a few scattered mosaics, and a rough Byzantine capital or two are left to it of the earlier structure. It too, it is safe to say, lives very largely (and very well) on the generosity of

Russian pilgrims. The Abbot, an aged but cheery Greek, produced some exceptionally good coffee and the usual *masticha*, and, having first, as in duty bound, explained how St. John the Baptist once took shelter in the cave which is now the chapel, proceeded to give us the history of the *vaporaki*<sup>1</sup> by the Dead Sea. It appears that a few years ago the monks of the adjacent monasteries decided to combine for the purchase of a small steamer to ply on the Dead Sea, needing some means of transporting the produce of their farms. As we have observed on Mount Athos, the monastic communities of the Orthodox Church conceal beneath a mediaeval exterior a very keen appreciation of the financial benefits which can be derived from patronage of modern methods and inventions; so an *iradé* to keep the vessel was obtained, not without a heavy outlay of *bakhshish*, and the thing was brought from Europe, laboriously piloted through the Customs, taken to pieces, and carried in sections to its destination. There it was put together again by knowing persons specially imported for the purpose at great expense. When at last it was ready, great festivities were announced. Mudirs, Qaimaqams, and the Mutesarrif were invited, and duly arrived on the appointed day, followed by a herd of hungry zaptiehs, who looked to the occasion for an unaccustomed fill. *Masticha* and *koniak* were freely imbibed; many a *rotl* of *luqum* was eaten. Then the distinguished company of Abbots, Prelates, Officials, and all 'Who's Who' beyond Jordan went on board for the trial trip. Just as the senior Abbot was about to give the order 'full speed ahead,' the Mutesarrif inquired :

<sup>1</sup> Little steamer.

"Has your All-Saintliness an *iradé* to move this *vaporaki*?"

"Masha'llah!" replied the Abbot; "of course I have."

"Let me see it."

"Here it is."

"Ah, it is as I feared. This *iradé* permits you to keep a *vaporaki*, very true, but it does not say that the *vaporaki* may be moved. Until, therefore, I have referred the matter to Constantinople, I deeply regret that it cannot be moved; and, should the *makina* be obstinate enough to ignore my order, it will be my painful duty to arrest it."

"The *makina* has long since rusted," concluded the Abbot, "but the matter is still, no doubt, under consideration in Constantinople."

As I commiserated with the genial old coenobite upon the drawbacks to life by the banks of the Jordan, I could not help thinking of the story of a certain Turkish man-of-war, moored, in the old days, to the mud-flats of the Golden Horn. A British Admiral who was then lent to Turkey for purposes of naval reorganization announced one day that on the morrow he proposed to inspect the ship. It being his first visit, commander and crew determined to spare no effort to make the inspection a success. Decks were scrubbed, brasswork was polished, officers repaired their uniforms, the men advanced the date of their weekly shave. Filled with just pride, they received the Admiral, who appeared to be agreeably impressed with what he saw on deck. As he was proceeding, however, to go below, the commander sought politely to dissuade him. He called attention to objects as yet

unobserved on deck, and advanced many reasons why the Admiral should not fatigue himself in the vessel's lower portions. But the Admiral was not to be deterred, and the Turk, muttering '*kismet*,' courteously, but with fading smile, led the way—to a flourishing kitchen garden! For so many years had the ship remained fast to her moorings, that her bottom had become rotten; and the mud had filtered through innumerable holes, making a respectable bed of soil. This was no reason, in those days, for removing the ship from the active list, and her officers sensibly decided to make the best of a bad business. Tomatoes, cucumbers, and that unromantic but succulent vegetable so beloved of the Turk, the pumpkin, were growing in abundance; and although the Admiral could scarcely commend the vessel's seaworthiness, I have no doubt that he was able, when he recovered from his astonishment, to praise the adaptability of her crew.

On the following morning we returned from Jericho to Jerusalem, and overtook strings of Russian pilgrims homeward bound from Jordan, the palmer's staff in their hands. The men, clad in cumbrous *padevki*, thickly quilted coats reaching down to the knees, were plodding patiently along the dusty road; some feeble old women were riding donkeys. Three days later, our caravan was ready, and we rode out of the Damascus Gate, bound for the north.

A good illustration of the variety of faiths which flourish among Syrians is afforded by the religious census of our retinue. The dragoman, a native of Jerusalem, was a member of the Church of England, in which his brother held orders. Our handsome old

cook Mubarek, in whose veins there surely flowed Crusaders' blood, was a *Latin*: so also was the head steward Antonio Salbo, an excellent old fellow who derived his name and a highly prized British passport from a Maltese forbear. Shamali, one of the attendants, was, I think, a Uniat Greek; the other, Georgie, a *Rûm Urtuduq*, or member of the Orthodox Church. Georgie was the dandy of the party, and was called el-Halebi because, as he said, some ancestor hailed from Aleppo. In reality it was on account of his love of fine clothes; for the Aleppines are notorious throughout Syria for their vanity, and the word Aleppine is synonymous with a swell. Khalîl, master of the horse, whose lapse from duty on another journey and subsequent repentance have been recorded by Colonel Mark Sykes in the pages of *Dar-ul-Islam*, was a follower of the Prophet, together with his equerry, the blithe and merry Fâris. So, too, were the seven muleteers, sturdy brothers of the house of Zarta, who dwelt in that home of Moslem orthodoxy, Nâblus.

It was along the Nâblus road that the first stretch of our journey lay. Leaving the city, the road makes its way northward through the Judaean uplands, which are grey, bare, and very faithfully rendered by Tissot. Judaea is a mournful country, unlike Samaria and Galilee, which are green and wooded, and Syria, which can show much brilliant colouring. We passed Ramah of Benjamin and El-Bîreh, where according to legend Joseph and Mary, returning from Jerusalem, first missed Jesus from their midst. Here for a while we left the road, and exchanged barren hills and stony watercourses for green fields and groves of ancient olives, where the sun played on the silvery leaves, and the owls sat

wearily and blinked. Presently we were in the road again, and camped at the village of Turmus 'Aiyâ, 21 miles from Jerusalem. The incidents connected with our camps require small description, and offer little variety. The camp pitched in the form of a square, the population crowding round it, gazing at everything with insatiable curiosity, the bitterly cold nights punctuated by the whistling of the guard to keep each other awake, the incessant howling of dogs, all these things were of regular occurrence, and need not be referred to again. On the following day, passing the ruins of Shiloh, we reached Jacob's Well; and a little further, in a rich and narrow valley, overlooked from the south by Mount Gerizim, *tur-berik*, the blessed mountain (a hill so holy that at the deluge, according to the Samaritans, the waters would not cover it), and from the north by Mount Ebal, the cursed mount, *tur-lit*, rise the walls and gates of Nâblus.

Nâblus is in many respects a peculiar town. An exception to the general rule, it goes by its later, in preference to its earlier name, although its history as Neapolis fades into insignificance before the events which made Shechem a stronghold of patriarchs, judges, prophets, and kings. Again, unlike the majority of towns in Palestine and Syria, it is peopled by Moslems of a fanatical and unfriendly strain, who view strangers with displeasure. To-day it is chiefly remarkable as the ancient home and refuge of 'the oldest and the smallest sect in the world,' the tribe of the Samaritans, who, reduced to a handful of not two hundred souls, yet struggle doggedly to maintain, amid many tribulations, their sad and precarious existence.

Into the early history of the Samaritans it is needless

here to enter. Ever at enmity with the Jews, since these, on their return from captivity, rejected their advances, they have clung to Mount Gerizim as the one true site for the temple of Jehovah, as the only lawful *qibleh*, and have never ceased to regard Jerusalem and its temple as the shrine of an heretical people. Time was when they were many, and truculent withal. In the reign of Zeno they fell upon the Christians; in Justinian's time they killed the Bishop of Sichem, and sacked and burnt the churches. "Khoja, if thou must scratch," says a Turkish proverb, "blame not the lice, but thyself"; and the pitiful condition of the Samaritans at the present time is perhaps the result of the reprisals which followed upon these acts of aggression. For many of them were scattered and slain; and when Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela visited Sichem, he found only one hundred survivors. This was in about 1163; but after the battle of Hattin the Samaritans fell on yet more evil days. Those in Caesarea, Damascus, and elsewhere dwindled and disappeared; and from that time onward the remnant of the sect which survived has dwelt solely in Nâblus. Here they have lived with all men's hands against them, hated by Jew and Christian, oppressed by Arab and Turk. Poor and friendless, without protectors, they have clung to life for the pursuit of two ideals: to continue their worship on Mount Gerizim, and to maintain the existence of their race. The former has not always been possible. For many years Gerizim was in other hands, and the Samaritans were forbidden to approach it; only in the latter half of the last century was access to it granted them once more. They never intermarry with strangers, and their numbers for some

time past seem to have undergone little variation. In 1675 they wrote that there were few of them ; 70 years ago they counted 40 families ; in 1901 there were 152 persons, 97 males, and 55 females. At the present time, although a man, if his wife is barren, is permitted to take another, it is doubtful if they can muster 200.

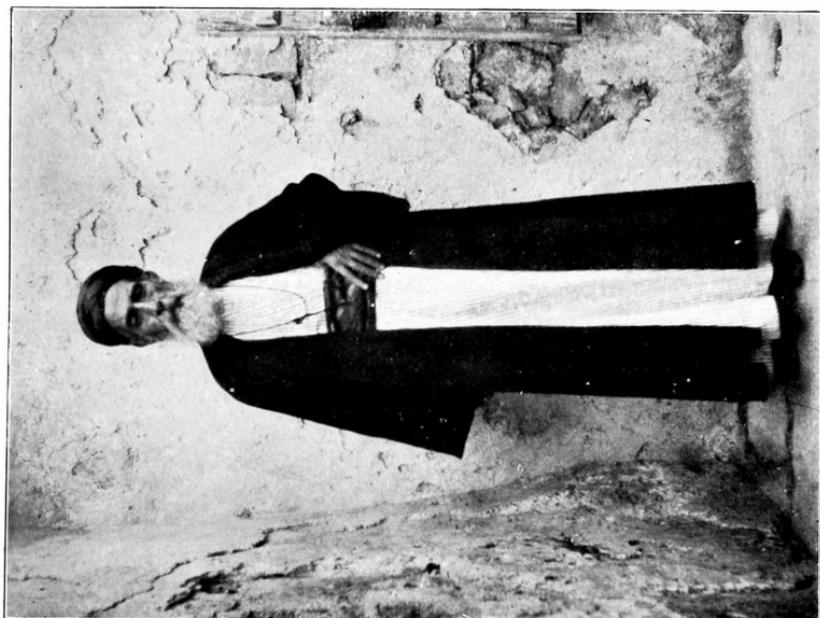
In the south-west part of the town is the little Samaritan quarter. There, in a small whitewashed house which contains synagogue, school, and High Priest's residence, we were received by the High Priest and his family. The High Priest's name was Jacob, the son of Aaron, the son of Solomon ; he was a tall, thin old man of 70, whose sad and dignified mien betrayed weariness and dejection. He was dressed as a well-to-do Syrian, but his turban, like those of all his people, was red ; it being by the colour of the turban<sup>1</sup> that the different nationalities of Syria are distinguished. Thus, the colour adopted by Moslems is usually white, with gold or yellow silk embroidery ; by the *hejâj*, or those who have made the pilgrimage, green. That worn by the Druses is snowy white, by the Sephardim black, and by the Samaritans red. It is a convenient system of identification in a country where the cut of the clothes is not necessarily an indication of the origin or religion of the wearer. Jacob's predecessor was his uncle Amram, the younger son of Solomon, his own father having died in his grandfather Solomon's lifetime ; on his uncle's death in 1872, he succeeded in

<sup>1</sup> In Syria the turban does not assume the dimensions which it has attained in India. It is merely a scarf, usually of silk, wound tightly round the base of the fez. The Beduin and peasantry wear a coloured cloth, bound with camel hair cord, instead of turban and fez.

SONS OF THE HIGH PRIEST



THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE SAMARITANS





preference to Amram's son Isaac, then still a child. This Isaac, when we met him, was a red-haired, jovial person, as far as any Samaritan can be said to be jovial ; and was evidently a man of more vigorous character than his cousin the High Priest. He had been to Oxford some years previously in an endeavour to sell Samaritan manuscripts to the Bodleian Library, and I suspect that he is the power behind the Nâblus throne, and inclined to domineer over the unhappy High Priest, cherishing, perhaps, some grudge at his having inherited his father's office. However that may be, he proved useful to us. Jacob the son of Aaron, while exceedingly courteous, appeared reluctant to display the famous *torah*, the Samaritans' oldest codex of the Pentateuch, which is shown to the people but once a year, and to strangers exceeding seldom ; but a tactful allusion to Isaac's travels, a cunning display of our familiarity with his movements, made Isaac into an ally before whom Jacob gave way. He led us across the court and through a small door that opened directly into the synagogue, a plain whitewashed room with a vaulted roof and scanty furniture, and from a recess reverently withdrew the *torah*, which was wrapped in a cover of green embroidered silk.

According to Samaritan tradition, the *torah* was written at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation by Abishoa the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the High Priest, the brother of Moses, in the thirteenth year of the settlement of the Jews in Canaan ; according to modern scholars it dates from the early centuries of the Christian era. It consists of the Pentateuch only, all of the Old Testament which the Samaritans accept, and is written in the Samaritan char-

acter on the hair side of a roll composed of the skins of lambs offered up in sacrifice. The roll is brown and brittle with age, and is encased in a silver cylinder, 'the tomb of the sacred book,' being wound on two rollers surmounted by silver knobs. The cylinder, on the back of which are engraved symbols of the Tabernacle and its fittings, is in three sections, joined by two sets of hinges, and when open, shows a column of text, when shut, encloses the entire roll. In the middle is a third knob, a dummy, and its total height, inclusive of the knobs, is about two feet six inches. This is the chief, and, indeed, the only treasure of the Samaritans, who are miserably poor. The High Priest complained that on account of their poverty his people were forgetting the old Samaritan language, and that only the *kahens* (priests) could now read and write it. Even they do not employ it for any but liturgical purposes. The language of their everyday life is Arabic, and Samaritan has become, like Syriac (except in three villages to be mentioned later), Coptic, and some of the old Slav languages of Russia and the Balkan peninsula, a tongue which only survives in church services, books of prayer, and official documents. Not a few of the latter have been collected and published ; and one epistle, written in the reign of Charles II., is of peculiar interest, as it not only throws light on the vexed question of the genealogy of the High Priests, but also illustrates the curious belief held for so many centuries by the Samaritans that there existed in England, France, and elsewhere in Europe large and prosperous Samaritan colonies, descended from captives carried away by the Franks from Nâblus during the Crusades.

The letter is addressed to the Samaritan colony in

England. It begins by stating that the community in Nâblus is weak and unhappy; that it has suffered a heavy loss by the death of its High Priest, the last of the race of Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron; and concludes by asking its brethren over the seas to send to it a priest of the Aaronic house, that the high priesthood might not be extinguished. The reason for this request was that a member of the Aaronic family alone can perform the functions of the high priesthood, the ordinary Levites being only able to undertake lesser priestly duties. Finding that no response came to their prayer, the Samaritans were obliged, no doubt, to have recourse to one of the latter, even though not properly qualified; for when, in 1820, the French Orientalist de Sacy inquired of the then High Priest, Shalmah-ben-Tobiah, as to his origin, Shalmah replied that he traced his descent from Uzziel the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the head of one of the principal Levitic families. In 1842, however, the same High Priest, in the name of the people, addressed a petition for help to Louis Philippe, appending thereto a genealogy of his family, which, omitting all mention of Uzziel the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, showed him to be directly descended from Aaron. It may have been that, realizing the interest which the learned world was beginning to take in his descent, he thought it well to go more thoroughly into the matter, with the above satisfactory result; as to which of his conclusions was correct I will offer no opinion. In other respects this petition is a most pathetic document. "We diminish in numbers," it says, "from day to day. We adhere with all our might to the observance of the law of Moses, and from the day on which our fathers heard the voice of the

Eternal on Mount Sinai until now, we have not departed one whit from His commandments."

"Ye must know," it proceeds, "that we continue under the rule of the Ishmaelites. We honour them, and are satisfied with their government. Yearly we give them money, each one according to his ability, that they compel us not to renounce our faith.

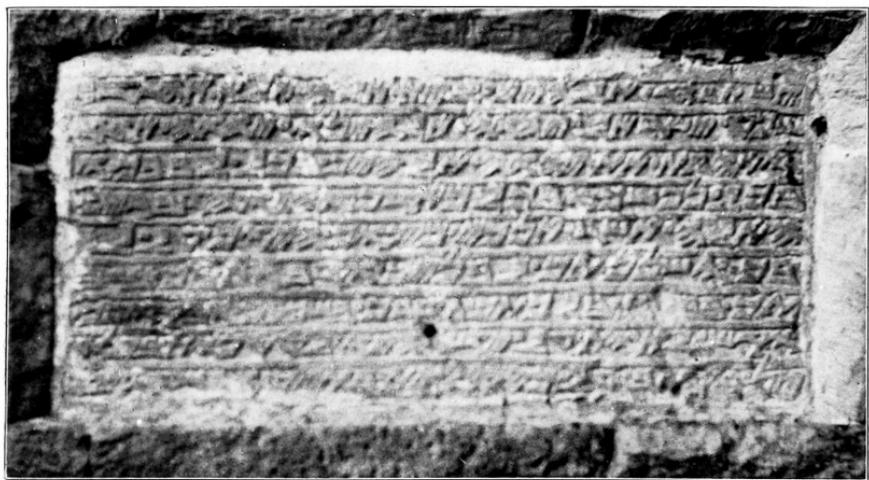
"But in these latter days the people of our town have turned against us, and will no longer bear with us. They forbid us to fulfil the precepts of our law, and we can no longer openly practise our religion. There is none to raise up our head; we are left abandoned to our misfortunes, broken-hearted, and knowing neither security nor rest. To you, therefore, we appeal, knocking at the gate of your compassion, and praying you to admit us to the shade of the roof of your mercy. For without you"—here comes the saddest, the most despairing phrase of all—"none would be troubled at our disappearance."

The government of Louis Philippe, which on the receipt of the petition was fully occupied with European affairs, did not judge it desirable at the time to meddle with those of Syria, and a few years afterwards itself disappeared. The prayer of the Samaritans thus remained unanswered; but with the renewed interest which the French began to take in the country after the accession of Napoleon III., their situation was improved. If not befriended by the Turks, at least they were tolerated; and to-day, although still poor and few in numbers, their lives are safe and their worship not interfered with.

An American writer on the Samaritans, Dr. Barton, has pointed out, ironically perhaps, that, although they



THE SAMARITAN *TORAH*



SAMARITAN INSCRIPTION IN THE HIGH PRIEST'S COURT



still outnumber the passengers of the *Mayflower*, whose descendants now are legion, there is little likelihood of their leaving so vast a posterity. Such a consummation would hardly, indeed, be desirable. It is to be hoped, however, that for many years to come they will be preserved, not, as Napoleon once said of another tiny survival of a former age, *comme échantillon de république*, but *comme échantillon du passé*; for there still speaks through the Samaritans of Mount Gerizim, albeit in feeble tones, the voice of a past of which all other living traces have long since ceased to be.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SAMARIA AND GALILEE.

THE mosques of Nâblus are of great interest, and four at least are of Crusading or pre-Crusading origin. Unfortunately, the fanaticism of the population makes access to them so difficult that I was only able to penetrate into two ; and in these my stay was sadly restricted by a jealous and impatient crowd.

The Jami' el-Kebir, or Great Mosque, which was founded by Justinian and restored under King Amaury, has preserved its basilical character, and no doubt looked much as it does to-day when the Council of Nâblus, thinking, perhaps rightly, that the misfortunes of the Latin kingdom were a divine punishment for the lax morals of the Crusaders, thundered forth its decrees against a vicious and dissipated clergy. Its five-arched porch is a good example of Romanesque sculpture ; the harpy perched on one of the capitals typical of twelfth century realism ; and the north court, with its handsome reservoir and four solitary columns, a peculiarly happy blend of Byzantine, Romanesque, and Saracenic, one of the chief delights of Syrian mosques. Into the Jami' en-Nasr, also a basilica, I was allowed no more than a glimpse, and thereafter I had to abandon the hope of seeing any more. I returned, accordingly, to

the camp, to find that I had been preceded by the High Priest's sons, who were hoping to turn an honest shekel by the sale of Samaritan writings.

Two hours of riding over pleasant olive-clad slopes brought us to the 'egg-shaped' hill of Samaria, now surmounted by the Moslem village of Sebastîyeh. "Compared with Shechem or Jerusalem," says Dean Stanley, "Samaria is a mere growth of pleasure and convenience—the city of luxurious princes," and the truth of this statement becomes apparent on approach. Herod's street of columns, which once completely encircled the hill, guides your way to the summit, and with the vestiges of elaborate terracing on its slopes, the ruins of temple and hippodrome, and the friendliness of the surrounding country, indicates that Samaria was the Versailles both of the northern kingdom and of the Herodian age. There is now very little of it left, and the best preserved of its monuments is the Crusaders' Church of St. John, a massive building in fairly good repair, except that the main body of the church is roofless. The eastern end, however, is intact, and has been walled off from the rest, to be converted into a mosque; in a corner of the left aisle is the village school.

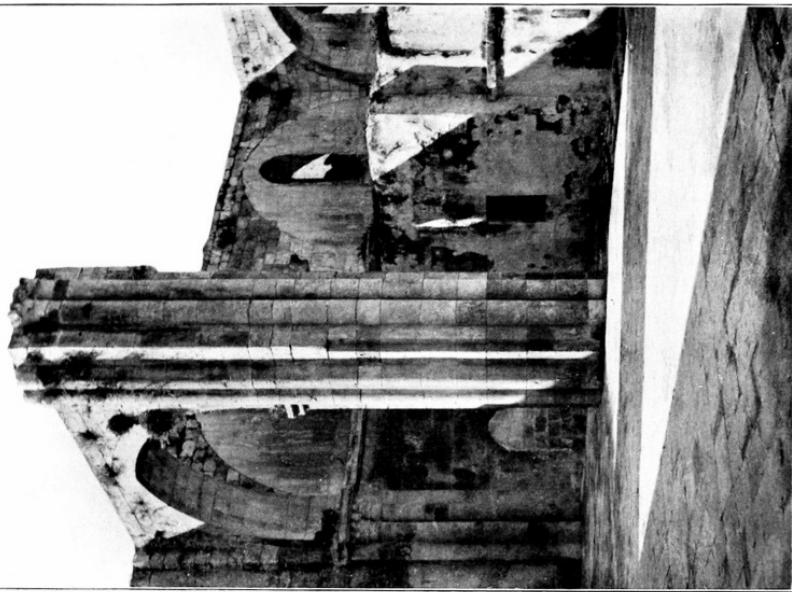
From Samaria we rode to Dothan, and lunched beside its ruins; then continued northward up and down hills and through shady groves of olives as far as Jenîn, where we pitched our camp.

On the following morning our way took us across the plain of Megiddo, and after ten miles brought us to a pleasant spring of water, which a depression in the ground has enlarged into a pond. The pond is identified by tradition with Gideon's Pool and with Goliath's spring, being now called 'Ain Jalut; and it lies at the

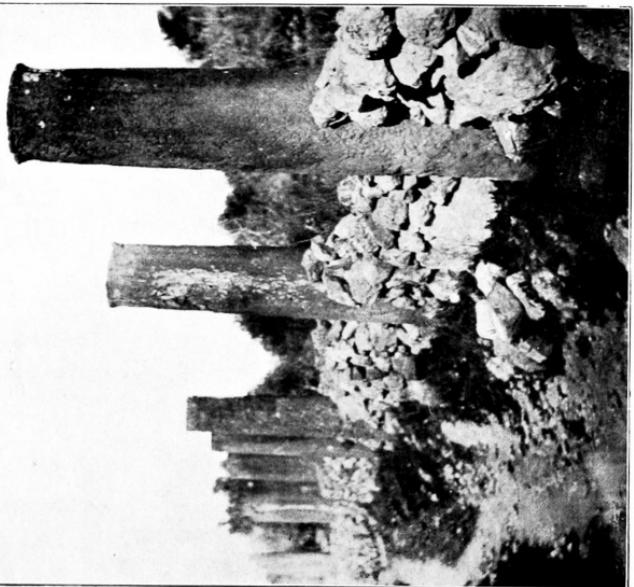
foot of the north-western extremity or spur of the mountains of Gilboa. This is a crescent-shaped ridge which, running in a north-westerly direction from the Jordan valley, forms a wedge bifurcating the eastern end of the great plain of Jezreel, dividing it into two branches, the northern, or plain of Jezreel proper, and the southern, or plain of Megiddo. The plains diverge almost at this very spot; you look south and see the plain of Megiddo, just crossed; you look east and see the green plain of Jezreel gradually falling toward Beisan and the Jordan. Here the camp remained, but we, after bathing in the cool clear waters of the pool, rode over the plain and across the line of the Haifa-Derat railway to Kokab el-Hawa, a Crusading castle crowning the summit of a hill immediately overhanging the Jordan valley.

The massive monuments of military architecture which the Crusaders scattered from Arabia Petraea to the northern corner of Mesopotamia are admirable in many respects, but in few so much as in the rapidity with which they were constructed. Rarely united, often at bay, constantly at war, the Crusaders were able, within a space of time so short as to make the achievement seem almost miraculous, to protect the passes and crown the heights of the country they held with castles which combine in quantities, rarely found elsewhere, solidity, vast extent, and architectural beauty. Frequently beauty of site is also present, and the castles of Tyrol or Lombardy can scarce furnish more picturesque a sight than Qal'at el-Hosn or Bâniyâs. The castles vary in character with the needs which provoked their construction. The greater ones, especially those belonging to the knightly Orders, are of the type of

CHURCH OF ST. JOHN, SAMARIA



HEROD'S STREET OF COLUMNS, SAMARIA





which Windsor is an example, stronghold and palace combined, with hall, chapel, and chapter house, as well as barbican, bastion, and keep. Others are fortifications enclosing part or all of an already existing town, as at Tartûs; others, again, are highly fortified strong places, partly intended as places of refuge in times of stress for the population of neighbouring villages. Of the latter kind was Kokab el-Hawa, which is more remarkable to-day for its wonderful situation than for the extent or preservation of its remains. It is built, as I have said, on the summit of a hill, and from its eastern walls you look down upon the Jordan valley beneath. The hill stands 1000 feet above sea-level, and 1800 feet above Jordan; immediately below you is the wide and fruitful valley, a rich green carpet through which the river, a streak of silver, winds in slow, circuitous bends. Opposite, and of equal height, are the wooded mountains of Gilead; while to the north gleam the waters of the Sea of Galilee, and behind it the snowy peak of Hermon. The Crusaders, for obvious reasons, called the castle Belvoir, but the Arabs, with more poetry, Kokab el-Hawa, 'star of the air,' challenging, for once, the Frankish supremacy in the domain of nomenclature. For in Crusading lands the Frankish names are as a rule the more picturesque of the two; and it would be difficult to match for their air of mediæval glamour, say, Château Pèlerin, Blanchegarde, or La Pierre du Désert. The castle is built of tufa or black basalt, which abounds in Galilee and beyond Jordan, and its outline and moat are still well preserved. So also are the south tower and one of the western circular bastions, while the original disposition of the interior has been made unrecognizable through the use

of its stones as building material for the village which now occupies the entire precincts. The inhabitants are *hâdari* or 'settled' Arabs (to be distinguished from the nomadic Arabs or Beduin), poor peasants who received us with pleasure but principally with curiosity, for it is not often that strangers come their way.

It was dark when we returned to Gideon's Pool, having travelled 40 miles in all on that day. On the following morning four hours of riding across another branch of the plain of Jezreel brought us to Nazareth, or rather, to the foot of the hill on whose southern slope Nazareth lies. In appearance Nazareth resembles some Tuscan or Umbrian hill-town, in character it is a small Jerusalem. With its many buildings of Italian aspect, white-walled, red-roofed, with its *campanili*, its fig-trees and cypresses, and its background of hills, it is not unlike Assisi, although lacking Assisi's charm; but the countless sacred sites, the colonies of the many sects who live here in their own quarters of the town, the monasteries and churches, hospitals and orphanages, make it in truth a detached fragment of Jerusalem. Even the detachment is now confined to geographical separation, for within recent years, in response to pressure from Russian and other Orthodox interests, it has been taken out of the vilayet of Beirût, of which it is now an enclave, and made part of the mutesarrifliq of Jerusalem, being thus united politically as well as in nature with that great centre of the pilgrim traffic. That centre, in return, sends forth a constant stream to Nazareth, of which the Russians form no small part; but it cannot be said that, apart from associations, Nazareth has much to show. None of its buildings can be compared in interest, even approximately, to the

Church of the Sepulchre ; and what is probably its oldest relic, the synagogue in which Our Lord preached, is now, after having suffered many vicissitudes and known many uses, a bare annexe of the ugly new church of the Uniat Greeks. Its principal attraction is the Latin monastery, the property of the Franciscans ; and although the church, a stately building, only dates from the eighteenth century, it is not devoid of interest. Beneath the church are shown the spot where the angel delivered his message to the Virgin, the site of her house before its miraculous journey to Loretto, and beyond it, up a flight of steps, a rock cavern, perhaps an old stable, which is called the Virgin's kitchen.

But the prettiest sight in Nazareth is Mary's Well, when towards evening the women come to draw water in long, graceful pitchers, and then slowly return, balancing them on their heads. Here the inhabitants foregather, the day's work being done, to sit and gossip and smoke, forgetting for awhile their divisions and their differences in the need which all have of the well. The well or the spring, even if it be no more than a slender trickle, is the most precious possession of all Arab towns ; it is not infrequently, indeed, the cause of the town's existence. It is the indispensable thing, the joint heritage of all the people ; and it becomes, in consequence, the *forum*, the meeting-place, and the club. Thus, in the unchanging East, it is around the well, which also changes not, that are to be sought the traditions of the town's past, and the life of the present.

It is right that before leaving Nazareth a word should be said of one of whose kingdom it was almost the central point. Towards the year 1740 a certain

Zahir el-'Omar, of the powerful tribe of the Beni Ziadneh, a man of enterprise and great ambition, took advantage of the Turks' loose control to improve upon his position as Sheikh of an Arab tribe. Gradually gathering round him an army largely consisting of fugitives from Turkish justice, and allying himself to the dreaded Druses, he succeeded in carving out for himself a kingdom extending from Acre, his capital, across Palestine to the Sea of Galilee. Here, with varying fortunes, he maintained himself for no less than fifty years, losing a fight now and again, but succeeding, on the whole, in keeping the Turks at bay, and in conferring upon his dominions, for he was a good ruler, an unaccustomed spell of prosperity. Disaster came to him at last, as to Henry II. of England, through the treachery of his own family. His sons, tempted by the bribes of his rival, Jezzâr Pasha, sold him to the Turks; and the old man of ninety, still fighting, still at the head of his Druse horsemen, fell into an ambush prepared by the brutal Jezzâr, who cut off the head of this 'King Lear of the Desert,' and sent it, pickled, to Constantinople.

As one travels along the high road which connects Nazareth with what was his third great town, Tiberias, passing Cana, now Kafr Kenna, where both a Latin and a Greek Church claim to occupy the site of the miracle and where the girls wear Austrian 4-ducat pieces, thinnest and widest of modern gold coins, attached to their plaits by strange cylindrical fastenings of silver, one comes to the field of a battle, compared with which old Zahir's bloodiest encounter was nothing but a skirmish. This is the two-horned hill of Hattîn, which decided the fate of the Crusaders in the Holy

Land. In 1185, after a disastrous reign, Baldwin IV., the leper King of Jerusalem, died, to be followed to the grave soon after by his little nephew Baldwin V. Upon the child's mother and his step-father Guy de Lusignan the succession now devolved, not without protests from the Hospitallers and the barons; for Guy, whose subsequent acquisition of Cyprus has already been chronicled, was so incapable that when his brother Geoffrey heard of his election, he remarked: "If they have made him a king, I suppose they would have made me a god, had they known me." The one mitigation of incapacity is recognition of the fact by the incapable one, but Guy possessed not even this redeeming virtue.

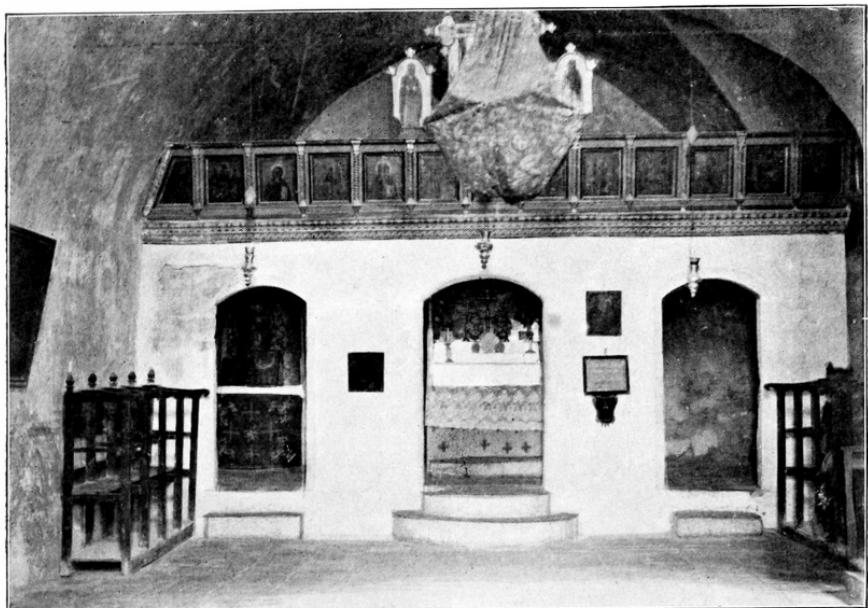
Saladin was then besieging Tiberias, and Guy, having raised an army with the treasure which Henry II. had been sending yearly since the death of Thomas à Becket, was for marching to its relief. In vain did Raymond of Tripoli, to whom Tiberias belonged, urge the folly of the attempt. He pointed out, very rightly, that there was no water between Seffuriyeh, where the army was encamped, and Tiberias; and added that he preferred to lose his city for a while rather than see the whole army perish. But Guy, abetted by the Grand Master of the Templars, who hated Raymond, persisted in his course, with the result which Raymond had predicted. On the march the army suffered greatly from want of water, from the heat, from the burning of the grass under foot by the enemy, and from the continual harassing of the Saracen cavalry. It halted for the night on the top of the arid plateau, in sight of the Sea of Galilee, and on the following morning, in despair, gave battle. The troops,

having had no water for twenty-four hours, were exhausted, and Saladin ‘broke the Franks on the Horns of Hattîn, and slew a great multitude, and took their kings prisoner.’ The True Cross was lost, and the King a captive. This was the greatest disaster which had as yet overtaken the Crusaders. Saladin now marched south. Nâblus, Caesarea, Jericho, Jaffa, opened their gates to him without resistance; and on the 2nd day of October, 1187, he took Jerusalem, granting to the besieged terms of almost unparalleled generosity. Henceforth Jerusalem remained a Moslem city, with the exception, later on, of a period of ten years, when the world witnessed the amazing spectacle of an Emperor, first excommunicated for not going on the Crusade, and then excommunicated for going, becoming master of Jerusalem without shedding blood, only to find that after taking possession of the town, for the recapture of which Europe had sent out five Crusades (one, indeed, went sadly astray), the services of the Church could not be celebrated in the Holy Sepulchre, because the Pope had laid every town in which Frederick found himself, the goal of the Christian world not excepted, under an interdict. But Stupor Mundi did not very much mind. ‘I am not here,’ he said, ‘to deliver the Holy City, but to maintain my own credit.’

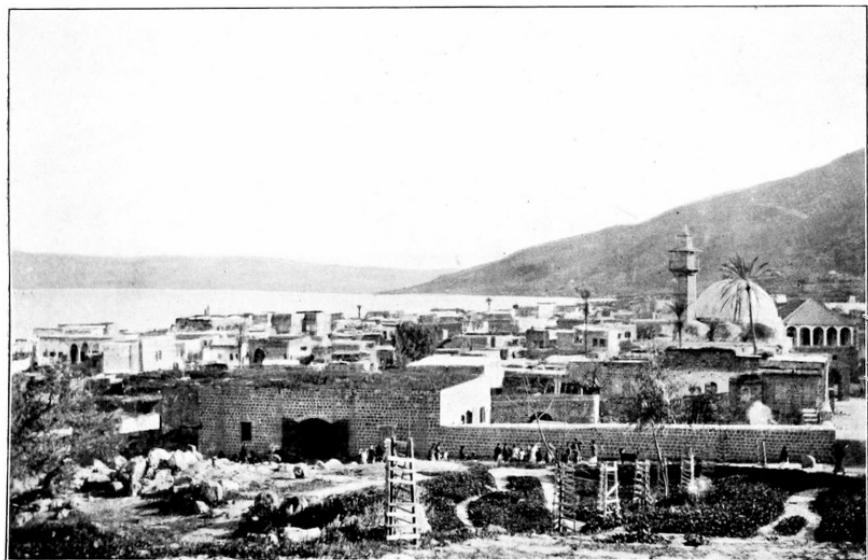
Hattîn is situated almost on the edge of the plateau along which we had been travelling since leaving Nazareth; and hitherto the weather had been cold and windy. As soon as we began the descent into the hollow of the Sea of Galilee, the air became still, and bleakness was changed to torrid heat. The road, instead of dropping suddenly, winds gently down the hill-side, affording constantly varying views of

the sun-baked little town on the shore of the blue, mountain-girt lake ; and as one comes closer, one is able to distinguish the crumbling walls of black basalt and the picturesque towers and battlements, relics of Sheikh Zahir. On reaching the bottom, we skirted the town, and, riding southward between the black city walls and the white tombs of the Jews, pitched our camp one mile away, on the very banks of the lake, facing those 'steep places' of Gadara down which it required but little imagination to picture great herds of swine still rushing violently to their destruction. A pretty town, Tiberias, from without, a most untidy one within. Owing to its great depth beneath the level of the sea, nearly 700 feet, the vegetation of the narrow strip of plain which fringes the lake is almost tropical, and date palms and banana trees mingle with the domes and minarets of the city's mosques. To these, to its citadel and walls, and above all to the lake, which is a gem, Tiberias's beauty is due ; the rest is squalid and poor. There are no churches of interest, there is not even a road running alongside the lake ; all streets at right angles to it terminate in *culs-de-sac* made by the water's edge. But for this shabbiness there is a reason. Most towns and districts in Syria, although possessing long and varied histories, are pre-eminently associated with one particular epoch, one particular race, one particular aspect of civilization : Antioch with the Seleucidae, Nâblus with the Samaritans, the Lebanon with the feud between Maronite and Druse. Tiberias's association, and that of the whole Decapolis, which once, as a garland of fair cities, encircled the lake, has always been with the Jews ; and although, when it was built by Herod Antipas to succeed

Sefturiyeh as the capital of Galilee, its Judaism, as in the case of all Herodian towns, was tinged with foreign influences and was looked at askance by the orthodox of Jerusalem, it underwent, after that city's fall, a complete and radical change. From being a centre of western and Hellenistic culture, it became the repository of Jewish tradition, the seat of the Sanhedrin and of a Jewish 'patriarch,' the home of Talmudic and rabbinical learning; and the fruits of Tiberian scholarship acquired fame throughout the Jewish world. During the middle ages, under various masters, the Jewish element remained predominant; and somewhat later, again, in the sixteenth century, Tiberias was the pioneer of what is known as Zionism, since Joseph Nasi, Duke of Naxos, of whom mention has already been made, anticipated a modern movement by obtaining of Suleyman the Magnificent permission to rebuild it as the capital of a Jewish state. Within the last few decades Jewish Tiberias has entered upon another aspect of its history in becoming one of the destinations of Jewish emigration from Europe. A few Sephardim have long been established in Tiberias, but it is only latterly that it has been filled with fur-bonneted Ashkenazim from Poland, Austria, and Germany, who come to await the Messiah, or, at least, to leave their bones beside those of their ancestors. Four-fifths of the town's population are now composed of these; and as they are not pre-occupied with mortal affairs, poor things, but rather strain after some elusive hope of a new dispensation for Israel, the prosperity and appearance of the town suffer accordingly. Tiberias has never been renowned for cleanliness, and it is there that that powerful potentate, that master of millions, Sultan el-Baraghît, the king of



THE SYNAGOGUE, NAZARETH



TIBERIAS



the fleas, holds his court. One of the old Arab geographers quotes a saying which still, no doubt, applies :

"Of the people of Tiberias it is said that for two months they dance, and for two more they gorge; that for two months they beat about, and for two more they go naked; that for two months they play the reed, and for two more they wallow. The explanation of this is that they dance from the number of fleas, then gorge off the nabak<sup>1</sup> fruit; they beat about with fly-laps to chase away the wasps from the meat and the fruits, then they go naked from the heat; they suck the sugar-canies, and then have to wallow through their muddy streets."<sup>2</sup>

On the day after our arrival we received a visit from the Qaimaqam and his staff, a body of varied composition. The Qaimaqam himself was a Damascene Christian married to a Greek, the Commandant of Zaptiehs a Cretan, the garrison doctor a Syrian, and the Commandant of the troops a Turk. They were most friendly; and, indeed, throughout our journey, it would be difficult to say how much we owed to the kindness and good offices of the Turkish officials. I am certain that our caravan was often regarded with suspicion, and I know that our movements were telegraphed from vilayet to vilayet, from qaza to qaza, with watchful accuracy and promptitude. The Turks, who have never been travellers except for the purposes of conquest, find it difficult to understand why foreigners should wish to leave their comfortable homes in order to wander through a strange country, except from some

<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the tree-lotus.

<sup>2</sup> For this and other quotations from Arab geographers I am indebted to Mr. Guy Le Strange's *Palestine under the Moslems*.

ulterior motive. By the time that we had attained our journey's end our acquaintance with Turkish officials had become extensive, as visits were, as a matter of course, exchanged at every place; and everywhere, without exception, did we experience the utmost courtesy, and in many cases acts of genuine kindness, which the suspicions entertained against us made all the more honourable.

I make no complaint whatever of these suspicions, and I am fully prepared to admit that, as a class, the traveller very often invites them by conduct which must appear to the natives of the countries he wanders through as either eccentric, or incomprehensible, or unpleasant. Upon few except innkeepers and dealers in antiquities (not usually natives) does he confer any real benefit; and, as regards this particular journey of ours, we traversed many districts where those professions were totally unrepresented, or represented by the crudest of amateurs. Moreover, when Europeans insist on visiting the more outlying portions of the Ottoman Empire, they throw upon the officials in charge of them a very real responsibility; and there have been some who, by foolhardily omitting to take simple precautions, have got themselves, and those held responsible for their safety, into difficulties. If a European is robbed, or captured, or murdered, the unfortunate functionary in whose province the event occurs knows that there will be the devil to pay, although, more likely than not, he duly warned the victim of his risks, and dissuaded him from his adventure. Hence I repeat that the treatment we received from Valis, Mutesarrifs, and Qaimaqams was more than generous in view of the anxiety which we probably caused them; and I consider

that the telegrams were in every way justifiable. How could they know that we were full of the virtues by which so rarely, and free from the vices by which so constantly, the traveller is beset? I do not suppose that they had ever read Sir Charles Eliot's masterly work *Turkey in Europe*, because, prior to the revolution, the importation into Turkey of foreign works dealing with that Empire was strictly prohibited. Doubtless, however, they had learned by observation the truth of the remark made in that book that "travelling generates an immoral habit of mind." The author justifies the aphorism with the following reflections. "You do many things in a place where you are going to stop only a few hours which you would not do in your permanent residence. Observe the undisguised selfishness and greed of ordinary railway travellers, the brutal violence with which they seize eligible seats or other comforts, the savage gluttony with which they ravage the buffet and carry off their food. Explorers apparently go further, and deal very lightly with the lives and persons of the natives through whose country they pass." The accuracy of all this is patent; and, had Sir Charles Eliot pursued the subject further, he might perhaps have added an allusion to the danger that the traveller in the East may supplement his imported stock of vices with others acquired on the road. For example, his conscience cannot fail to be numbed when he learns that the dealer whom he is trying to cheat is trying to cheat him; and many of the episodes from every day life which chance to come to his ears tend to confirm the consoling theory that in this imperfect world the knave is often successful. I will freely admit that I was moved, not to indignation,

but to laughter when I heard the following tale of a small Turkish town which shall be nameless. The town possessed two doctors, who under ordinary circumstances should have been sufficient for its needs. But one of the doctors, when summoned to a patient, always inquired first if the case was infectious, and the other was usually in hiding from his creditors. Similar was the effect produced on me when I was told the perfectly true story of the man who, having murdered his father, appealed to the Government for clemency on the ground that he was an orphan. And when I turn for moral guidance to our old friend the Khoja of Aqshehir, what lesson does that respected personage preach?

One day he borrowed a black *tenjeré* (saucepan) from a neighbour, and detained it for a very long time. Finally the owner made anxious inquiries, to which the Khoja replied :

“ You cannot have your *tenjeré* yet, for she has only just had kittens, and is not yet well enough to be moved.”

The man went away in amazement, for he had never heard before that *tenjerés* were wont to have kittens. On the following day, however, he was surprised and pleased to receive, with the Khoja’s compliments, a tiny *tenjeré* and a message to say that it was the pick of the litter, and that the mother was doing well. Shortly afterwards his own *tenjeré* was duly returned to him.

Next year the neighbour begged the Khoja to borrow the saucepan again, and to superintend the arrival of another family. But ever after, the Khoja, when asked to return the utensil, would anxiously whisper :

"Hush, O my uncle, do not disturb the *tenjereé*.  
You may frighten her into a miscarriage."

By the beautiful shores of the Sea of Galilee we spent two delightful and peaceful days. On the third morning, we sent the caravan ahead overland to meet us at its northern end, and, ourselves embarking in a fishing-boat, sailed across to Capernaum, now Tell Hûm, which is almost at the apex of the lake, about a mile and a half to the west of where the Jordan enters it. A strong breeze, almost a squall, took us over in two hours, while the boatmen droned in nasal *meiopées* the latest love-songs from Beirût. From Capernaum, where the Franciscans were restoring a beautiful old synagogue, possibly that of the centurion Cornelius, we sailed on to Khân Minyeh. Here we rejoined our caravan, and commenced the ascent of 3400 feet out of the hollow up to the mountains once more, to the ancient town of Safed. Halfway up is the large but decayed *khân* of Jubb Yûsuf, Joseph's pit, a typical specimen of the old caravanserai, consisting of a huge quadrangle with accommodation for a multitude of men and beasts, built close to the Jubb itself, the very pit, one is told, into which Joseph was thrown by his brethren. From the *khân* a climb of an hour and a half brings one to Safed, highest, and undoubtedly windiest town in Galilee, reputed birthplace of St. Anne, and according to Jewish tradition the spot to which the Messiah, after appearing in Tiberias, will mount to set up His throne. On this account it is, like Tiberias, a city of Jews, but they have not, as in Tiberias, monopolized its history. During the Crusades its possession, as commanding the Sea of Galilee, was fiercely contested; and the town is built round three sides of the

castle which then topped the summit of the hill. Constant assaults, and also earthquakes, have left the castle a hopeless ruin, with little beyond two big cisterns still in good repair; nor could I see that famous well which Dimashki (who died at Safed) with pardonable pride asserted to be one of the wonders of the world, that well at whose mouth were iron arms with iron hands and fingers, which seized the full casks as they came up from the bottom, and poured the water automatically into a tank, whence it ran by a conduit into the cistern.

From the castle mound one obtains an unobstructed survey of the country all around. The lake, to the south, looks wonderfully small and far away, simmering in the sunshine; but over to the north great Hermon, shaggy and white, looms most deceptively near. Every day it seemed as if the next would bring us to his foot, every day new valleys and hills, hitherto unsuspected, interposed themselves between us and him. We slept that night in an olive-grove at the foot of the castle, close to the *serai*<sup>1</sup> which was erected, I fancy, in gratitude for 25 years of 'Abdu'l Hamid's reign; and during the evening our tents were nearly blown away by the wind. On the following day we departed, but before passing out of the town accepted the friendly invitation of the Mission doctor to see the hospital of the London Mission to the Jews. In this out-of-the-way little Arab town, many miles from a good road, on the top of a mountain which is now not even on a main caravan route, it was certainly a surprise to find so admirable, almost palatial, an installation as this Mission and hospital possess. The houses are well built of

<sup>1</sup> A building in which are united the offices of the various Government departments. The equivalent of the Turkish *qonaq*.

local stone, on the operating room no expense has been spared, the wards are clean and cheerful, and there is excellent accommodation for the doctor, the English nurses, and for the school. We went through the wards, where aged Jews were happily reposing, or gently muttering in Yiddish to each other and themselves. The old people love the hospital, a thing not difficult to understand when one has seen their filthy and miserable hovels in the ghetto; but the children do not like the restraint, and always pine to be discharged. As there is much disease among the Jews here, principally ophthalmia, the hospital does an immense amount of good; but I doubt if the Mission entirely fulfils the expectations of the philanthropic people at home who support it. It is but seldom that conversion follows cure.

Over hills and across dales, *per valli, per boschi*, we journeyed on, now seeing for the first time Lake Huleh, smallest and northernmost of the three lakes of the Jordan valley, the only one above sea-level; and passing, at the village of Deishun, a settlement of Moghabins who fled from their native Algeria after some rising against Napoleon III. Soon after, we reached Qades, or Kedesh-Naphtali, and camped in a pleasant hollow below the village by the ruins of El-Amâra. Qades is one of the villages inhabited by the people called Metawileh; and as it is in the religion of this strange race that its principal interest lies, it may be well briefly to recall how Islam was rent by schism, and how this little Shiah sect is found to-day in the midst of a Suni stronghold.

Mohammed had paved the way for, had, in fact, created, a spiritual and temporal monarchy embracing

all true believers, in which the spiritual and secular authority was not shared, as in the Holy Roman Empire, by a Pope and an Emperor, but was concentrated in the hands of one person, the Khalif. The word khalif means successor, lieutenant, or vicar; and under the first three Khalifs, Mohammed's immediate successors, 'Abu Bekr, 'Omar, and 'Othman, the conquering Arabs carried Islam into Syria, Persia, and Egypt. 'Othman, a kindly, incompetent old man, was murdered in 655; and there succeeded to him as fourth Khalif the Prophet's son-in-law 'Ali, who was destined, unconsciously, to be the rock upon which Mohammedanism split into its two principal divisions. The first step towards schism was the refusal of Mu'âwiya, of the powerful Omayyad family and 'Othman's governor of Syria, to acknowledge the new Khalif. He alleged as his reason 'Ali's neglect to punish 'Othman's murderers. In point of fact, he himself had for some time cherished the ambition of becoming Khalif; and with the support of the Syrians resisted by force 'Ali's demand for his submission. In the meantime, the political centre of gravity of the Mohammedan Empire had shifted from Mecca and Medina. 'Ali, turning for support toward Persia and Iraq, concentrated his forces at Kufa in Lower Mesopotamia; Mu'âwiya's headquarters were at Damascus. The civil war which ensued was not only a struggle between the two rivals, it represented the struggle between the Syrian and the Persian elements, the Semite and Aryan, for the dominant position in the Moslem world. In 661, after five years of war during which he steadily lost ground, 'Ali was murdered at Kufa; whereupon his son Hasan, much against the wishes of his brother Husein, abandoned

the contest and resigned his claims to Mu'âwiya. The latter was now sole Khalif, and the Mohammedan world once more politically united, for the present under the leadership of Syria. Spiritually, however, the breach between the two parties grew ever wider, and in Persia 'Alî became posthumously the object of veneration far greater than that which he had enjoyed in his lifetime, became, in fact, the central figure of that branch of Islam which is known by the name of Shiah. He was soon believed to be an incarnation of the divine spirit, as great as, if not greater than, Mohammed himself, and the latter's immediate successor; and the Shias regarded the three first Khalifs and, still more, those of the Omayyad dynasty founded by Mu'âwiya, as heretics and usurpers.

Meanwhile, under the latter there had been growing up, as a complement to the Quran, the so-called 'Tradition' or *Suna*, in which were embodied miracles alleged to have been performed by Mohammed, incidents, true and fictitious, in his life, as well as many precepts and regulations of the three first Khalifs and of their Omayyad successors. For this reason, much of the 'Tradition' was rejected by the Shias, while from it the other party took its name; and Suni and Shiah to this day divide the Mohammedan world, the Shias comprising, roughly speaking, the inhabitants of Persia and about five millions in India, principally in Oudh, the Sunis the remainder of the Moslems.

Whatever importance may be attached to the doctrinal questions on which Suni and Shiah divide, it cannot be doubted that the fundamental cause of the breach was a national or racial one. Their religious differences, although not as slight as those which

separate the Armenian from the Orthodox Church,<sup>1</sup> were originally secondary to the rivalry between the two peoples, and they have been wittily satirized by Thomas Moore in the sixth letter of the *Twopenny Post Bag* :

“ You know our Sunnites,—hateful dogs !  
 Whom every pious Shiite flogs  
 Or longs to flog—’tis true, they pray  
 To God, but in an ill-bred way ;  
 With neither arms, nor legs, nor faces,  
 Stuck in their right canonic places !  
 ’Tis true, they worship Ali’s name—  
*Their* Heaven and *ours* are just the same—  
 (A Persian’s Heav’n is eas’ly made,  
 ’Tis but—black eyes and lemonade).  
 Yet—though we’ve tried for centuries back—  
 We can’t persuade the stubborn pack,  
 By bastinadoes, screws, or nippers,  
 To wear th’ established pea-green slippers !<sup>2</sup>  
 Then—only think—the libertines !  
 They wash their toes—they comb their chins—  
 With many more such deadly sins !  
 And (what’s the worst, though last I rank it)  
 Believe the Chapter of the Blanket !

“ Yet, spite of tenets so flagitious,  
 (Which *must*, at bottom, be seditious ;  
 Since no man living would refuse  
 Green slippers, but from treasonous views ;  
 Nor wash his toes, but with intent  
 To overturn the Government !)—  
 Such is our mild and tolerant way,  
 We only curse them twice a day,

<sup>1</sup> To describe these is a task which taxes even the cunning Armenian.

<sup>2</sup> “ The Shiites wear green slippers, which the Sunnites consider as a great abomination.”—*Mariti*.

(According to a Form that's set),  
 And, far from torturing, only let  
 All orthodox believers beat 'em,  
 And twitch their beards, where'er they meet 'em.

“ As to the rest, they're free to do  
 Whate'er their fancy prompts them to,  
 Provided they make nothing of it  
 Tow'rd rank or honour, power or profit ;  
 Which things, we nat'rally expect,  
 Belong to US, the Establish'd sect,  
 Who disbelieve (the Lord be thanked !)  
 Th' aforesaid Chapter of the Blanket.”

Suni and Shiah, again, have split into a host of subdivisions. One day, it is related, Mohammed prophesied that his followers would separate into seventy-three sects, and that of these all but one, the Nâjîyeh or ‘ Saved Ones,’ would go to hell. Despite the risk, this figure has been far exceeded. The Shias alone number more sects than the Prophet had allowed for the whole of Islam ; and to one of these sects the Metawileh undoubtedly belong, notwithstanding the assertions of some writers that they are the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of Galilee, and of others, that they are a branch of the Assassins. The Metawileh are strangers in Syria ; and as their faith tallies with that of the orthodox or Imâmiyeh Shias of Persia, having nothing in common with the mystical beliefs of the Assassins and Isma'ilîyeh, nor with the yet wilder and more esoteric mixture of religions practised by the Nosayrîyeh and the Druses, it is safe to conclude that they entered the country during one of the Persian invasions, and settled in the villages of the Bilâd Beshâra, the district between Qades and

Tyre which they still inhabit. They maintain a close connexion with the sacred shrine of Kerbela, to which all Persia goes on pilgrimage, and when they bow to the ground in prayer, they touch with their heads a cake of earth brought from the site of the murder of Husein. They alone among the dwellers in Syria possess teachers of the rank of Mujtahid, that most exalted order of Mohammedan divine which exercises much influence in Persia, although it no longer exists among the Sunis; and they still govern their personal affairs according to Shiah civil law. Certain travellers, unaware of this fact, have accused them of exceptional moral degradation because temporary marriages, known as "marriages of privilege," are permitted by them, in addition to permanent alliances; but this institution, while unknown to the Suni jurists, is perfectly legitimate according to the Imamîyah code. Marriages of privilege may be for any period specified in the contract, and, on its expiry, may be renewed by a fresh contract, but then for life only; if this is not done, they are *ipso facto* dissolved.

In point of fact, the Metawileh are strict in their religious observances, keep themselves aloof from their neighbours, and are cordially disliked by these in return. They are supposed also to resent the presence of strangers, and to avoid all intercourse with them; but we found them friendly, cheerful, and interested; as interested in us as were we in them, apparently undismayed by their isolation, and, unlike the Samaritans, well able to hold their own in foreign and unfriendly surroundings.

## CHAPTER VIII.

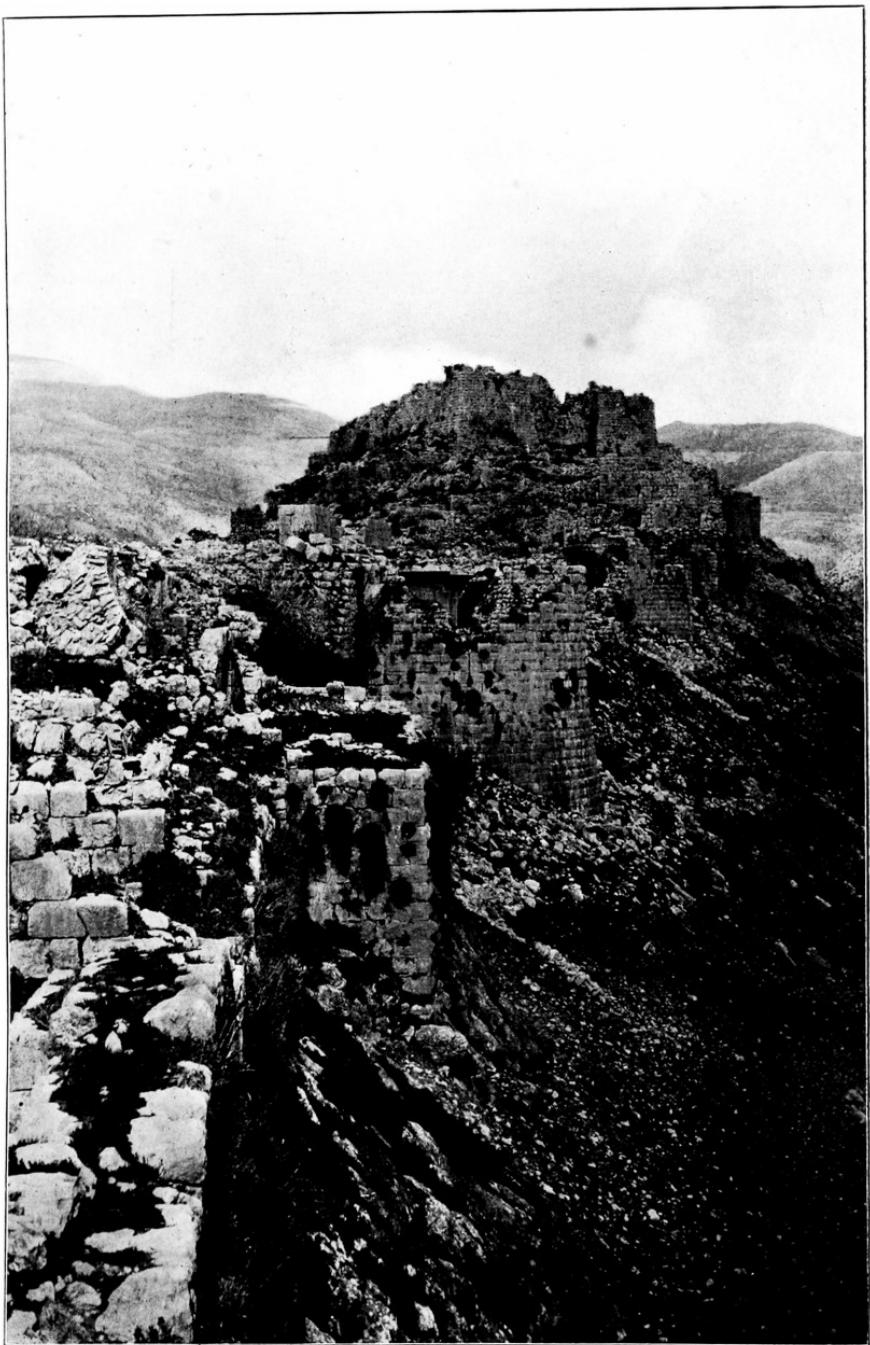
### HERMON AND DAMASCUS.

THE old Via Maris, the mediaeval caravan route which connected Egypt with Damascus and beyond, branched off from Safed, and, crossing the Jordan south of Lake Hûleh, keeping to the south, also, of Hermon, reached Damascus by Jîsr Benat Ya'qûb, the Bridge of the daughters of Jacob, and El-Quneitra, present headquarters of the former Gaulanitis. Our route, a longer one, took us north of the lake; only after we had passed the castle of Hûnîn, the Châteauneuf of the Crusaders, did we bend to the east, and, descending some two thousand feet into the low, swampy ground of the 'Ard el-Hûleh, commence to cross the numerous streams which here combine to form the Jordan.

Our first camp after leaving Qades was by the Beduin settlement of Ez-Zuq, on an island formed by two branches of the Nahr el-Hâsbâny, artificially separated so as not to flood the plain when, after the winter rains, the streams are heavy with water. On the plain graze the cattle whose care is the Beduin's occupation, on the plain, too, by the edge of the lake, grows the papyrus of which they build their huts. They are Ghajars, an inferior class to the Beduin of the desert, and their existence here is commemorated in the name of the

three-arched Roman bridge, Jisr el-Ghajar, by which on the following day we crossed the other branch of the Hâsbâny, and passed on to Tell el-Qadi. Here El-Leddân, the main source of the Jordan, emerges in a lovely pool, here two large ilexes, decked with innumerable bits of rag, mark the site of the ancient frontier town of Dan. This is a region of green boscage and running water, more like a scene from the Black Forest or a wood in the Scottish Lowlands than the slope of a Syrian mountain. For we are now on the ascent once more, and in less than an hour from Dan reach the hill of Bâniyâs, which the Wâdi Khashâbeh cuts off from the southern flank of Hermon. This hill is of threefold interest, illustrates three different periods of its history. At its foot is the grotto anciently dedicated to Pan (hence the name Paneas, of which Bâniyâs is a corruption), together with the beautiful spring which with the Hâsbâny and El-Leddân forms the three principal Jordan sources; close by is the town, the Caesarea Philippi of the New Testament; towering above these, magnificently dominating from the summit the whole country-side, rises Qal'at es-Subeibeh, one of the greatest and one of the best preserved Crusading castles in all Syria.

The hill terminates in a massive wall of rock. Here is the cave, dark, profound, and not lacking either in mystery or grandeur, whence issued, until on the first day of the year 1837 a terrific earthquake destroyed Safed and upheaved the watercourses, the source of Jordan which now in countless little rills bursts forth immediately beneath it. The majesty of the cave, the impressive sound of ever-running waters, and the deep green shadows of its densely wooded approaches, thick



QAL'AT ES-SUBEIBEH

Facing p. 154.



with ilex and sycomore, oak and pine, make this spot a fitting site for the mysteries of the pagan god. Here was the grove of Pan, here, carved in the rock beside the cave, are three niches to his honour. The inscriptions of the two lower niches have been almost entirely worn away by time ; but under the one nearest the cave, which once enshrined, no doubt, a statuette of the goddess Echo, can still be deciphered the legend :

ΤΗΝΔΕΘΕΑΝΑΝΕΘΗΚΕ  
ΦΙΛΕΥΤΧΩΔΙΟΤΤΑΝΙ  
ΟΥΙΚΤΩΡΑ·ΡΗΤΗΡΑΥΣΙ  
ΜΑΧΟΙΟΓΟΝΟΣ

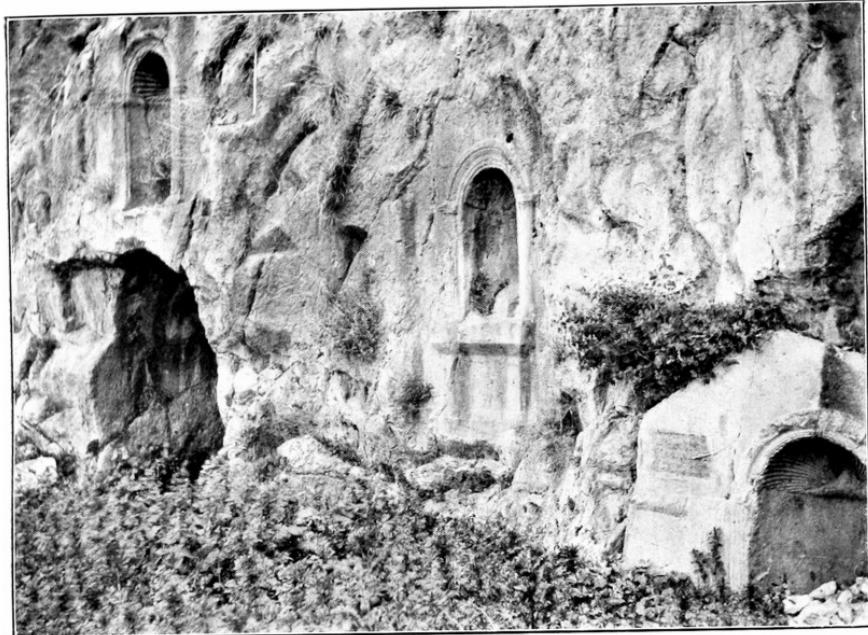
Victor, Lysimachaeon, a priest, to the lover of echo  
Zeus-Pan, great Zeus-Pan, raised this divinity here.

And as if proclaiming to the traveller the many-sidedness of Syria, a *turbeh* of St. George on a higher slope of the hill distracts him from the shrine of paganism to one which claims the allegiance of Moslem and Christian, as its many fluttering rags, the attribute of sanctity, betoken.

It is strange that a saint whose career is shrouded in such obscurity, whose very existence has not infrequently been called in question, should have acquired so wide a measure of popularity as has the Patron Saint of England. Introduced into England by Richard Cœur de Lion, he there recalls such desirable things as Garters, golden sovereigns, and barons of beef ; in Portugal, until the recent revolution deprived him of his rank, he was a Lieutenant-General on the active list of the army (more fortunate, thus, than St. Anthony of Padua, who was only a Colonel of infantry in the garrison of Cascaes). Venice and Genoa were under his protection ; and throughout the Levant, in Anatolia

and in Rûm, he is regarded as a friend both by Nazarene and by follower of the Prophet. Here, then, is one of his numerous shrines, while still higher, surmounting the symbol of conciliation, stands the castle, emblem of strife. From the modern village, which is scattered through the somewhat confused remains of another and earlier castle (for the most part of Arab origin, but showing, here and there, a vestige of the ancient town), we climbed laboriously to the wasp-shaped structure with which the Crusaders have crowned the elongated summit of the hill. Sloping downwards from east to west, and affording a splendid view of the water-laden 'Ard el-Huleh, Qal'at es-Subeibeh illustrates better, perhaps, than any other castle in Syria how much the Crusaders were able to effect in a brief space of time. They were in continuous possession of Bâniyâs for barely a quarter of a century ; but within that period they constructed, on earlier foundations, a castle five hundred yards long, and two hundred yards wide at its greatest breadth. And it was no mere fortified hill-top, but a castle in the truest sense of the word. Several of its vaulted chambers are still intact ; and its vast cistern, now a beautiful sight in its decay, gives ample evidence of the thoroughness with which the builders did their work.

We leave the castle and turn our faces eastward, cross the intervening *wâdi*, and finally set foot on Hermon. And now a change comes over the face of the country. Whether on the slopes of Hermon, or on the flat approaches to Damascus, arid and treeless expanse succeeds the sylvan glades of the Jordan sources. Hermon, of course, is Alpine; he is the Jebel esh-Sheikh, the hoary-headed among mountains, and the



THE GROVE OF PAN



QAL'AT ES-SUBEIBEH ; THE CISTERN



Mount of Snow. Bare rock and biting winds he offers, and it is natural that he should. But it must be remembered that to the east of him begins the Syrian desert ; and that Damascus is an oasis, rich and wide itself and not separated by much from the fertile country to the west, but an oasis nevertheless. This does not mean that nowhere between it and Bâniyâs is a living thing to be seen. On the contrary, our last camp before Damascus was in the lovely orchards of Kafr Hawar ; and a day's journey before that, on a plateau on Hermon's side, 5000 feet high, whence to the right we surveyed the plain of the Hauran, vineyards bore testimony to the richness of the volcanic soil. Cultivated patches there are, wherever there is water ; but the presence of vegetation is no longer to be taken for granted. Where there is vegetation, it comes as a welcome and refreshing change ; and that is why Damascus, the metropolis of the desert, is the pride of its citizens and the desire of the Beduin. Its rivers and its girdle of living green, more than pleasing to those who have never seen a desert, seem almost like Paradise to those who have never seen anything else.

For two days we rode along the eastern spurs of Hermon, often over snow, crossing the boundary where Galilee ends and Syria proper begins somewhere near the village of Mejdel esh-Shems, a short journey from Bâniyâs. This village is inhabited by Druses, an outpost of those who since 1861 have migrated from the Lebanon to the Jebel Hauran ; and I must chronicle our astonishment at being greeted, as we neared the village, by white-turbaned noblemen mounted on prancing Arabs with a nasal ' Waal, strangers, come right

up.' That the low-class Syrians of the coast emigrate to the United States is well known ; but that the high-born Druses of the mountain did likewise, and then returned, to resume the customs and costumes of the desert, was a fact which we undoubtedly had not realized before. Emigrants to America may be divided into two categories, those who go with the intention of remaining, and those who, regarding existence there as a stage of purgatory or as an episode in their lives necessary but unpleasant, not to be recalled to mind in after years, return as soon as they have put by a sum of money sufficient to enable them to enjoy life at home. To the first class belong Germans, Scandinavians, and Poles ; to the second, Syrians, Italians, and, as we now learnt, Druses also. Our friends, however, were not at home for good ; they were merely enjoying a holiday or respite. In a few months they would go forth once more, once more don the uniform of flat-brimmed bowler and elastic-sided boots ; but in five years they would come back, never to leave again, and would ride for the rest of their lives the finest mares in the Hauran.

And now we approach the ancient capital of Syria. Descending the slopes of Hermon, we see in a haze the white city embosomed in green, the green, again, an island in the brown desert tints ; and after riding over the barren plain beside the equally barren Jebel Qasyun, suddenly find ourselves in the most marvellous and unbroken series of orchards which it is possible to imagine. Almond and apricot trees in full flower, interrupted only by low mud walls dividing the gardens and by the narrow lanes between them, encompass the town with a ring of blossom and verdure so thick that to traverse it and to reach the beginnings of the city

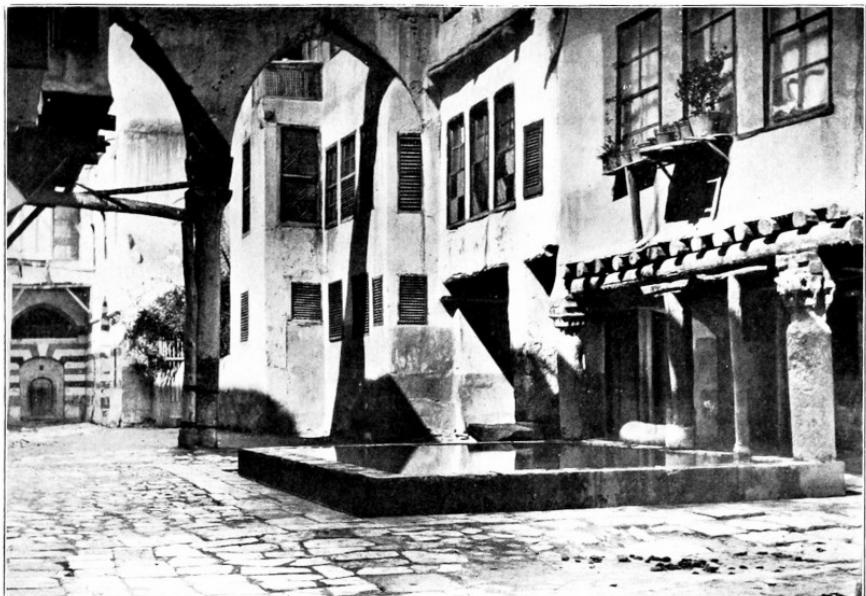
itself was the matter of an hour. Many and varied have been the descriptions which travellers, eastern and western, have given of Damascus. The former, for reasons stated above, have been as a rule redundant in their praise ; the latter range over the whole gamut between enthusiasm and disappointment. No longer is Damascus to the outward eye a city of gorgeous palaces and fairy-like mosques, bursting with the choicest and richest treasures of the East and spreading out its glories to every passer-by ; the *rendezvous* of Emirs, Khâns, Nabobs, and other fabulous personages such as might have been met with in the days of Marco Polo. It is a large and still very oriental city, but its great monuments are few, and the beauties of its private houses are concealed within their *patios* and hidden from the street. It is crowded, indeed, with Asiatics of almost every race, but these are for the most part poor pilgrims going to, or on their way from, Mecca ; and its bazaars, although still offering carpets, silks, and other eastern wares, are yet more replete with European manufactures, before which, alas, the native handicrafts are slowly giving way. But it is a town full of charm although not full of splendour ; and when the traveller sees with a shudder that the bazaars are roofed with corrugated iron and stocked with the produce of Birmingham, he can console himself with a hundred delightful little corners reminiscent of the Arabian Nights, or with some humble and decaying mosque made beautiful by a dado of tiles on whose creamy ground the turquoise blue melts imperceptibly into the loveliest of greens. Damascus, while no longer a city of luxuriant oriental magnificence, is not wholly, or very appreciably, westernized and spoilt ; much there is, no doubt, which is out of place, but it is

not yet sufficient to ruin the general effect, or to mar the exquisite beauty of the detail.

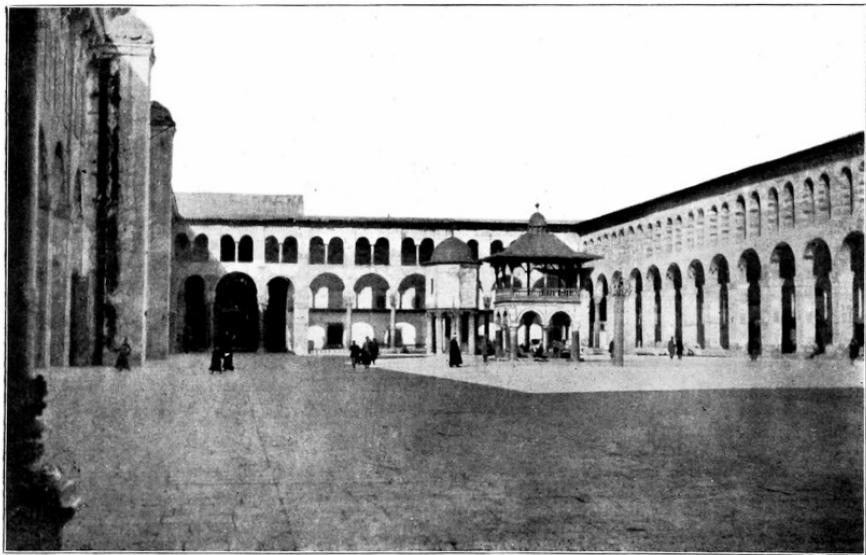
A splendid city, however, it must once have been, especially when, as the seat of the Omayyad Khalifate, it enjoyed for a strangely brief span the position of capital of an independent kingdom. It is one of the curiosities of Damascene history that, important as the city has always been, its periods of independence have been few and short. Into the eighty-nine years of the Omayyad dominion it crowded its days of glory as the fountain of an Arabian civilization which, spreading far beyond the confines of Asia, gave Mohammedanism and art to North Africa, and a brilliant era to Spain. From this period dates its greatest architectural achievement, the Omayyad Mosque, as much the heart of Damascus as the Sepulchre is of Jerusalem ; perhaps more so, since the allegiance of Jerusalem is divided between the Sepulchre and the Sakhra, whereas since the Arab conquest Damascus has always been essentially a Mohammedan city, despite its large Christian population. With the Sepulchre it has a further feature in common : as that establishment houses in its numerous chapels a variety of forms of the Christian faith, so the Omayyad Mosque assigns prayer-niches to the principal Suni sects or schools. There remain to-day those of the Shafi'iyeh, the Malekiyeh, the Hanefiyeh, the law-givers, and the Hanbaliyeh ; and Dimashki also mentions another, which has presumably shared the fate of the Nestorians in the Holy Sepulchre, 'wherein is a cistern of water, and which belongs to the people of Zeyla,<sup>1</sup> who are negroes.'

Like the Popes of the Renaissance, the Omayyad

<sup>1</sup>In the Somaliland Protectorate.



A CORNER OF DAMASCUS



THE COURT, LOOKING WEST, OMMAYAD MOSQUE



Khalifs were mighty builders and splendour-loving princes; 'Abd el-Melek's Dome of the Rock is no unworthy specimen of their great conceptions, lavish expenditure, and, above all, of their excellent taste. 'Abd el-Melek had, as we have seen, a political motive for devoting attention to Jerusalem; his son and successor Al-Walîd was occupied in erecting for his capital Damascus a mosque which, although lacking the traditions of the almost prehistoric Sakhra, was, as far as human artificers could make it, a noble companion to that splendid shrine. And yet it was not altogether without traditions. On its site once stood a heathen temple, possibly to the god Rimmon, which gave way in its turn to the church of St. John the Baptist, the principal place of Christian worship in Damascus during the Byzantine supremacy. This supremacy was shattered in 636 at the disastrous battle of the Yarmûk, by which the invading Arabs put an end to Byzantine dominion in Syria, having become, a year or so previously, in a most curious manner, masters of Damascus. One 'Abu 'Ubâida, in command of Khalif 'Omar's army, was besieging the city on the western side, while Khâlid, victor on the Yarmûk, Κάλεδος, ὁ λέγουσι μάχαιραν τοῦ θεοῦ, was assaulting it on the east. The siege was long, and the Christians, in the expectation of help from the Emperor Heraclius, who was then at Homs, made a good stand. After a time, however, seeing that help was not forthcoming, the cavalry despatched by Heraclius having been intercepted on the Homs road, they began to despair; and finally, one night, sent a deputation to 'Abu 'Ubâida, who was known to be the more merciful of the two besieging generals, with terms of surrender, which he agreed to

accept, confirming them in the occupation of their churches. As he was proceeding, however to take peaceable possession of the town, Khâlid, who in ignorance of what was occurring had just stormed the walls on his side, approached from the east, burning and pillaging as he came. The two commanders and their hosts met near St. John's Church, both utterly amazed at the *rencontre*, and Khâlid, who, according to the chroniclers, was full of the lust of slaughter, refused at first to abide by the terms made by the other. Finally, he was persuaded to acquiesce, but only on condition that the matter should be referred to the Khalif. 'Omar decided that each was to keep what he had taken; and thus it came about that Damascus was treated half as a conquered place and half as one that had surrendered. The rights of the Christians to fourteen of their churches were preserved, but a compromise was made with regard to that of St. John. As that edifice was close to the spot where the generals had met, it was divided into two parts; the western half was retained by the Christians, the eastern passed to the conquerors, and was converted into a mosque. This arrangement continued until, some seventy years later, Al-Walîd, who wished to enlarge it and beautify it, compelled the Christians to cede their portion in return for compensation elsewhere. He then proceeded, while retaining something of the old structure, to erect what the Arab writers are unanimously agreed in designating as the greatest and most costly mosque of Islam; and although their statistics are somewhat wild, the mosque, even as it stands to-day, fully confirms their praises.

The result of his outlay, of the ransacking of churches

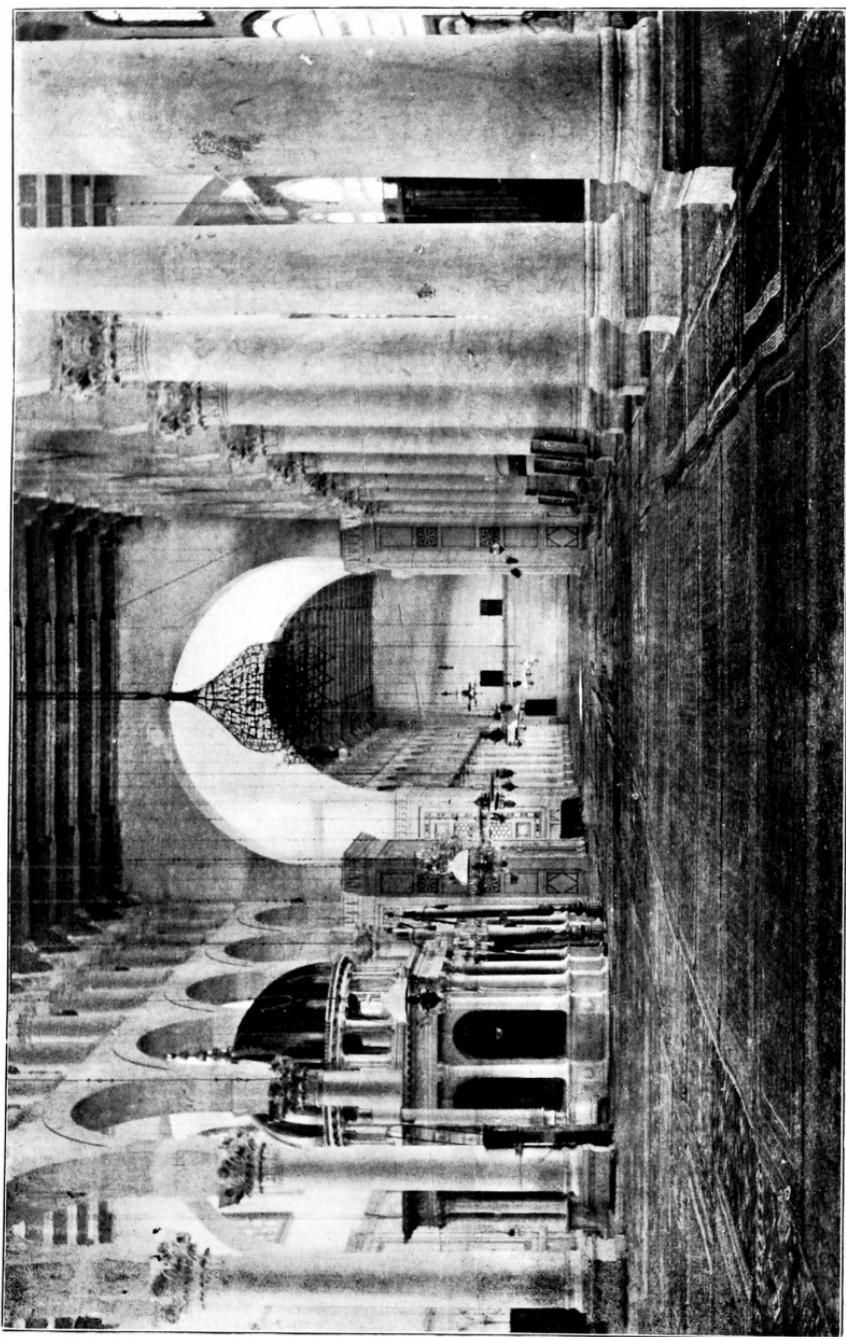
for marble columns and of Byzantium for skilled workers in mosaic, is the spacious and airy basilica which we see to-day. Three fires, one the result of a riot between the orthodox Shahs and the Fâtimites, another, and this the most serious, when Timur sacked the city in 1400, and a third which occurred in 1893, have not greatly altered its form, although much of the mosaic is gone, gone, too, the 600 golden chains from which in Al-Walîd's day were hung the lamps. The mosque is about 450 feet long and 125 feet wide, and on its floor are spread, as far as we could estimate, close on 1400 carpets, some new, but some of great age and beauty. The most prominent object of the interior is the shrine, under which is said to repose the head of St. John the Baptist; although there is also a tradition that it contains the remains, not of John the son of Zacharias, but of John the son of Sergius, secretary to one of the Khalifs, who, having been buried in the Christian Church of St. John before its annexation, was subsequently confused with the Forerunner, its patron saint. The shrine is a mosque-like structure standing between two columns, and surmounted by a green dome; over the sarcophagus, which is very large, lies a heavy green velvet pall, embroidered in golden letters with Arabic texts.

Not to its interior, however, nor to its lofty dome—‘the Eagle Dome’—does the Omayyad Mosque owe its effect, but to the great court of which it is the southern boundary, the court which is as indispensable a factor in its beauty as is the Haram plateau in that of the Dome of the Rock. The court, as long as, but wider than the mosque, is indeed a lovely place. Wide galleries form its border, containing rooms for the use

of scholars, and supported on horseshoe arches which, if they cannot rank in gracefulness of design with those in the Omayyad masterpiece of Cordova, are yet not unworthy of the position they occupy. In the open space of the centre stand three admirable little cupolas, the Dome of the Treasure, the Dome of the Fountain, also called the Water Cage, and the Dome of the Hours; three minarets, on which the builders have lavished all their skill, seem to carry its praises to the skies. At its eastern end is a like number of chambers, collectively known as the Mosque of Hasan and Husein, the sons of 'Alî, the fourth Khalif. In the middle chamber, concealed by a black silk curtain, rests the head of Husein, enclosed in a silver niche; and in the one adjoining are the *turbehs* of both, although neither is buried here. Hasan lies at Medina, where he died, probably of poison, in the year 669 (not, however, in the Prophet's tomb, for Mohammed's widow Ayesha, 'the Mother of the Faithful,' would not allow it); and Husein's headless trunk, after being exposed on the field of his murder for a full day, was interred where he fell, at Kerbela near Babylon, which with Nejeb, the shrine of 'Alî himself, has become the principal object of Shiah pilgrimage and veneration.

In the busy hum of the bazaars without, this court is an enclave of stillness and repose; as the one represents the material side of Damascene life, so the other typifies the spiritual, none the less real because outwardly more subdued. Not always, however, has it been so. Too recent easily to be forgotten are the events of 1860, that dark year in which the Christians of Damascus were massacred by the fanatical Moslems, abetted, possibly, by their Governor, and for once by

DAMASCUS, INTERIOR OF THE OMMAYAD MOSQUE AND JOHN THE BAPTIST'S SHRINE





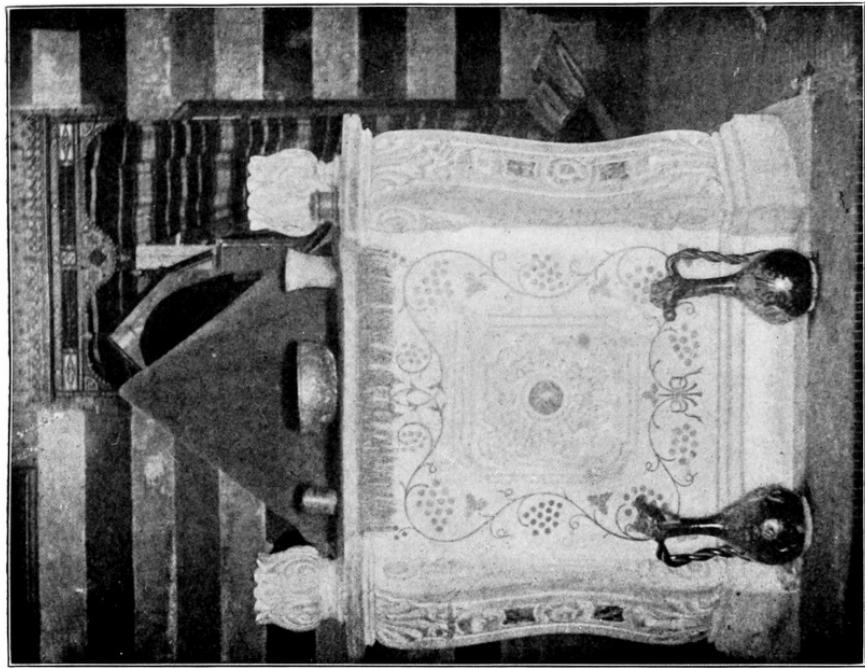
the Druses also—'Abd el-Qader, the great Algerian Emir, alone protesting, alone the refuge of the persecuted wretches among those who had lost all reason and mercy and were only intent to kill. The Vali, Ahmed Pasha, may have connived at the massacre, he may only have vacillated, feeling himself unable to cope with the wave of frenzy which, communicated, perhaps, by the Indian Mutiny, and stimulated by what true believers felt to be the intolerable pretensions of the European Consuls, had overwhelmed the people. At all events he paid the penalty and died, like a man it must be said, at the hands of Fuad's executioners; and there were those who whispered that, had he but spoken the word, the soldiers would have thrown down their arms and refused to perform their hateful task. With him were put to death more than two hundred others who had participated in the massacre or who were suspected of having done so. Fuad Pasha, sent by the Porte, which had been stirred into a distasteful activity by the indignation of Europe, to repress and to punish, took no half measures; he knew well that the least remissness on his part would see the French, then attending to the Druses in the Lebanon, within the gates of Damascus. He hit swiftly and hard, if sometimes astray of the mark, and for fifty years Damascus has been at peace.

'Abd el-Qader had in his day fought well, but unsuccessfully, against the French. With him another great Moslem sheds lustre on Damascus; like him, too, a stranger, but unlike him victorious in his wars against the Franks. This is Saladin, perhaps the noblest figure on either side in the history of the Crusades, a man who met treachery with magnanimity, and for evil

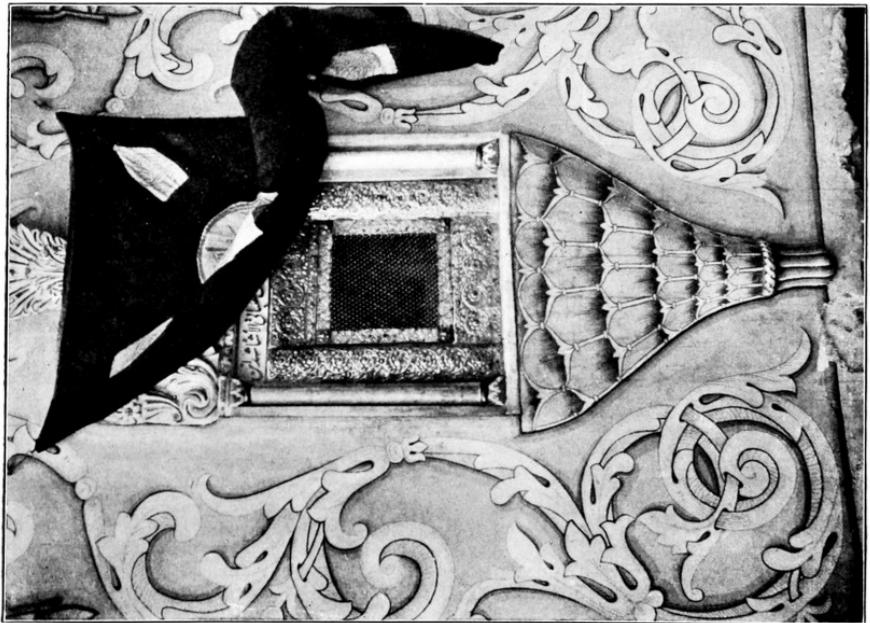
returned good. His life is too well known to need recounting here. All that could ever be brought against him by the Christian chroniclers was his failure to comprehend the theory of the papal, episcopal, and priestly dispensations which enabled the Crusaders to break oaths and treaties without offending their consciences, and to slaughter a cityful of hostages whom in return for a similar undertaking given, and carried out, by the Moslems, they had engaged to spare. He is buried here, in a beautiful little mausoleum off the northern side of the Mosque, decorated only with lovely tiles, and in the purity and simplicity of its character not unlike him who rests there, with the two vases, the Mameluke device, at his feet. "His memory God render fragrant, and on him may He confer a thousand mercies; and may He make many like to him among the sons of Adam."

West of his tomb, in a square near the Barada river, the Abana of the ancients, is a large modern monument of bronze; it does not offend against the Moslem law prohibiting images of living objects, for the top of the monument is a model of the great Meccan Mosque, while telegraph lines twine up the sides. It commemorates the construction of the Hejaz Railway, whose northern terminus is Damascus, a railway which, already at Medina, is intended to make Mecca easily accessible to the Moslem, and more particularly to the Turkish, pilgrim world. The railway, peculiar for this reason, is remarkable also in other respects. It is the product of Mohammedan enthusiasm, of Mohammedan generosity, and in a measure, too, of Mohammedan 'benevolences' (a certain percentage of the salaries of Turkish officials was deducted for the purpose); and its

SALADIN'S TOMB



RESTING-PLACE OF THE HEAD OF HUSEIN





construction by the Turkish Government, with the help of contributions from Moslems in all parts of the world, but without the support of European capital, evoked the surprise of European statesmen, and the disgust of the Sherif of Mecca, who has never taken kindly to the Khalif in Constantinople. Not only does this railway, a striking proof of 'Abdu'l Hamid's statesmanship, facilitate very greatly the long and often dangerous pilgrim journey, but, and this is perhaps more important, it has linked the centre of the Empire with its turbulent Arabian outposts, making the despatch of troops to the Yemen, a perennial necessity, no longer so slow and costly an undertaking. Since the advent of steamships to the Red Sea, Damascus has ceased to be to the same extent as formerly the pilgrims' starting point. Egyptians, Tunisians, Algerians, and Moors, as well as Persians, East Indians, and Malays have no need of the railway, as they now disembark at Jeddah, the port of Mecca, which lies only forty miles from the Holy City. To the peoples of Asia Minor and Turkestan, however, the Hejaz Railway offers the easiest route; and the streets of Damascus teem with Bokharans, Turkomans, Circassians, Afghans, and other denizens of Central Asia, southward or homeward bound. These people, with their thick quilted garments and high astrakan caps, add very greatly to the interest and colour of the place; and, as you sit in one of Damascus's numerous cafés, sipping your cup of coffee or of cinnamon and inhaling the fragrant product of the Turkish *régie* (only a bold man will venture on the potent *narghilé*), you see, as on the Galata Bridge, half Asia pass before you. Types range from the seedy Government official in fez and Stambûli frock-coat to the

Mongolian-looking gentleman from somewhere east of the Hindu Kush, from the dervish in camel hair garb, which looks (and must feel) like brown felt, and a hat of the same material, shaped like a beehive, to the hardy bandit from the mountains of Kurdistan. Or you may see two Turks walking to the bazaar hand in hand, as is the habit of these friendly creatures, and stop at the fez-blocker's stall for new stiffness to be infused into their headgear. The shops and sights of the big city afford endless satisfaction to the strangers from far away. Mosques, baths, and coffee houses fill them with constant wonder; and the life of the streets is to them, no less than to the European, a source of keen delight. In the East the street is the appropriate place for both business and diversion. Fairs and side-shows enliven it; and as I walked one day down the 'Street which is called Straight,' I found a crowd eagerly watching a *fakir* as he forced bodkins through his neck and cheeks without drawing blood, or, apparently, inflicting pain, a sight which I had seen once before, not in the East but at Thomar in Portugal, at the foot of the enchanting castle-convent of the Knights of Christ. Although the Moslems close their shops on Fridays, the Jews theirs on Saturdays, and the Christians theirs on Sundays, so that business in Damascus and, in fact, in all big cities of the Turkish Empire, is in full swing on only four days out of the seven, this prolonged week-end is scarcely noticed. Great, too, are the attractions of the Saddle Market and of the Cloth Bazaar. All trades, all handicrafts, have here their appointed sites. Confectioners, silk merchants, copper-smiths, and the rest, instead of posting themselves in strategic positions as far as possible from each other,

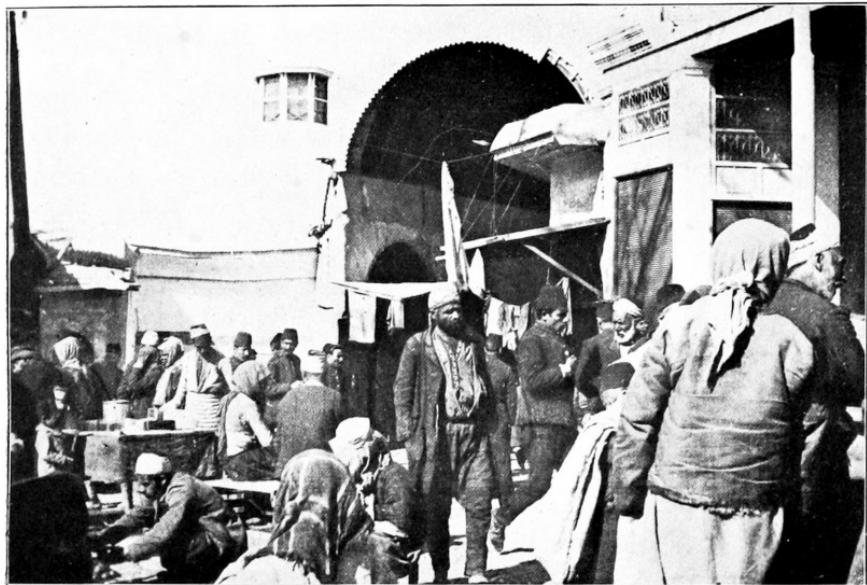
prefer to concentrate in their own bazaars ; and resignation,<sup>1</sup> not resentment, is shown by one and all if their neighbour's stall is favoured. To the inhabitants of this part of the East time is of little or no importance, principally for the reason, I imagine, that they rarely have interests outside their profession or occupation to make demands upon it ; and eastern shops are not places where one buys hastily, thereupon to depart. One smokes, drinks coffee, eats Turkish Delight, and passes the time of day with the owner ; and bargaining is far from being, consequently, the animated and voluble struggle to which one is accustomed in Southern Europe. To complete a purchase is often a matter of days, even of weeks ; and the vital point, the price, is led up to ever so skilfully, ever so cautiously, ever so slowly. This sometimes involves many visits on the part of the prospective purchaser, and only then does the real contest begin. Sometimes an appeal is made similar to the adjuration of ancient Greece : "For my beard's sake make it less!" or : "Will you disappoint my beard?" To the onlooker, however, it frequently resolves itself into a matter of nods and shakes of the head, the interpretation of which is the reverse of the Occidental's ; a backward jerk of the head, accompanied by a click of the tongue against the roof of the mouth, is an emphatic negative, a gentle shake sideways indicates assent.

Before leaving Damascus, we called on the Vali in his fine new *serai* by the river-side. Chukri Pasha was formerly at Rhodes ; and Nazim Pasha, who was Governor of Rhodes at the time of our visit, Vali of

<sup>1</sup>This is in accord with the principles of Mohammedanism. The word 'Islam' means 'resignation,' i.e. to the will of God.

Damascus, or, correctly speaking, of the vilayet of Syria, which comprises the country between the Jordan and the Lebanon on the west and the desert on the east, from south of the Dead Sea to north of the town of Hama. Nazim was an energetic and reforming Governor, keen on progress and sanitation, and very popular in the vilayet ; hence, in accordance with one of the most baleful characteristics of the old *régime*, he was regarded with grave suspicion in Constantinople. It was decided that he was 'dangerous' ; and by a truly Turkish process he and Chukri changed places, Chukri obtaining thereby very great promotion, but Nazim going into virtual banishment as Vali of the Archipelago. Chukri was a pleasant and an able man, and spoke French well ; but he appeared apprehensive and oppressed by the cares of the State, and did not convey the impression of a powerful personality. Indeed, his post is no bed of roses ; and it may well be, when he returns in the evening to the large house which his predecessor built in the *faubourg* of Salehiyeh, after an arduous day spent in settling grievances, adjusting conflicting claims, and trying to keep in check the ever turbulent Druses and the impudent Beduin Sheikhs, that he thinks regretfully of the pleasant windmills and fresh sea breezes of Rhodes ; and that Nazim Pasha, surveying from his castle the distant mainland shore with its equally distant cares, is able to find in his sea-girt ease and calm some compensation for the turn of the wheel which took him from a province, and set him to rule a parish instead.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This was written before the Italian occupation of Rhodes.



SCENE IN THE BAZAAR, DAMASCUS



A PILGRIM FROM RUSSIAN  
TURKESTAN



MOSLEM PILGRIMS ON THE  
HEJAZ RAILWAY



## CHAPTER IX.

### DAVID, SOLOMON, AND QUEEN BALKIS.

ONE afternoon, as I was passing by the Booksellers' Bazaar, now a mere vestige of what it was in the days when scholarship was cultivated in Damascus, I stopped before the booth of a wizened little old man, and asked to be allowed to examine some of his wares. Lying on a shelf I noticed three or four Qorans, apparently of great age and covered in folding bindings of well-worn lambskin. I was making to take them down when, almost angrily, the owner forbade me to touch them. Indicating, contemptuously, a pile of other old manuscripts heaped in a corner, he informed me that only those among which were no copies of the sacred book might be inspected by the unbeliever. One of the bundle I bought for the sum of two mejidiyehs, the old man appearing quite indifferent as to whether I took it or left it. It proved to be a collection of the legends which Moslem tradition has woven round those characters of biblical history who have a place, too, in the Kalendar of Mohammedan prophets; and these are some of the stories which it was discovered to contain :

*A Tradition about Daûd—The Blessing of God upon him.*

As soon as he was chosen to be king, Talut<sup>1</sup> mustered the army of the Israelites, and advanced against the Philistines at the head of seventy thousand men. One day, as the host was marching through the desert, it could find no water, and there arose a murmuring against Samwîl and against Talut. But Samwîl prayed to God, and immediately there bubbled out of the rocky ground a spring of water fresh as snow, sweet as honey, and white as milk. Then said Samwîl to the soldiers, who were hastening forward : “ Through your discontent and your murmurings, you have sinned against your king and against God. Deny yourselves, therefore, this water, that ye may make atonement for your sin by self-restraint.”

But the words of Samwîl found no hearing. Only three hundred and thirteen men, the same number as that which fought in the first encounter of the Moslems against the unbelievers,<sup>2</sup> conquered their thirst, and refreshed themselves but moderately; the remainder of the host resisted not the temptation to drink deeply of the spring. When Talut saw this, he dismissed all his army; and, relying on the help of God, went forth against the enemy with only the handful of men who had overcome their desire, beseeching the Almighty to fill their hearts with patience, to confirm their feet, and to grant them the victory over their oppressors.

Now among this small band were six sons of one 'Isâ, a man worthy and of good repute. Alone the seventh son, who was named Daûd, had remained at home with his father; but now that the encounter was

<sup>1</sup> Saul.

<sup>2</sup> The encounter at Bedr, A.H. 2.

long delayed, for none would accept the challenge to single combat with the giant Jalut<sup>1</sup>, 'Isâ sent his seventh son also to the camp, partly to take fresh provisions to his brethren, partly to bring news of their condition.

On his way to the camp Daûd heard a voice, issuing from a stone that lay in the middle of the road, which called to him :

“Take me with thee! I am one of the stones with which the prophet Ibrâhîm drove away Satan when he sought to turn him from sacrificing his son, as God had commanded him to do.”

Daûd placed the stone, which was inscribed with the Holy Name, in the pocket of his outer garment, for he was clad not as a warrior but as a wanderer. Having gone a little further, he again heard a voice from another stone, saying :

“Take me with thee, for I am the stone which the angel Gabril displaced from the ground with his foot, when he caused a spring to flow for Isma'il out of the desert.”

So Daûd took this stone also, and, placing it with the other, continued on his way. But soon he heard issuing from a third stone the following words :

“Take me with thee! I am the stone with which Ya'qûb fought with the angels whom his brother 'Isâ had sent against him.”

Daûd took this stone also, and continued his journey without further interruption until he reached the camp of the Israelites, where he heard a herald proclaim that whosoever should kill Jalut, would receive Talut's daughter to wife, take part with him in his kingdom, and, lastly, become his successor. As none, however,

<sup>1</sup> Goliath.

came forward to accept the challenge, Daûd went to Talut and offered himself; but the king, amazed at his youth, first inquired of his brethren how so tender a lad could hope to face the dreaded giant.

"Whenever a wolf," said they, "attacks his sheep, Daûd runs after him and cleaves him in twain; and when he shoots with his sling, he never fails to hit his mark."

Talut, satisfied with this, summoned Daûd to his presence, and, clothing him with fine raiment and making him one of his retinue, bade him be of good courage in the encounter.

Meanwhile, Jalut had come forth at the head of his mighty army. He was mounted on an elephant, and clad in armour, and the weight of his armour was fifteen hundred pounds. When the two armies were face to face, Jalut contemptuously awaited the Israelitish champion, but great was his surprise when Daûd stepped forth to meet him, armed only with his sling.

"Who art thou, lad," he asked, "that comest out against me with a sling? Go thou home and play with the children of thy years. Knowest thou not that I am the slayer of kings, the vanquisher of armies, and that the sling is only meet for dogs?"

"A dog I hold thee," replied Daûd, "because thou hast offended against God and against His apostles"; and thus saying, drew the stones from his pocket. The giant, infuriated by the boy's speech, charged down upon him on his elephant; but Daûd, calling upon the God of Ibrâhîm, of Ishâq, and of Ya'qûb, fitted one of the stones in his sling, and taking aim, shot Jalut through the nose, and the stone passed through his head and came out at the back of his neck. With the second stone

he then drove back the right wing of the Philistines, and with the third the left ; and these deeds are confirmed in the words of the Quran : “ And by the will of God they routed them ; and Daûd slew Jalut, and God gave him the kingship and wisdom,”<sup>1</sup> namely, power and the gift of prophecy, “ and taught him according to his will,” that is, the arts of fashioning coats of mail and of understanding the language of birds.

But Talut became jealous of Daûd, because all Israel praised him as the greatest of heroes ; and he sought secretly many times to kill him. Yet Daûd always forestalled his plots, and because he would not be revenged, Talut’s hatred grew but the greater on account of his generosity. One day, while her husband was away, he visited his daughter, Daûd’s wife, and commanded her to deliver Daûd to him in the night, threatening her with death if she refused, and compelling her to take an oath that she would do as he wished. When Daûd returned home his wife came forth to meet him in great distress, and told him what had passed between her father and herself.

“ Remain true to thy oath,” said Daûd to his wife, “ and when I am asleep, open to thy father the door of my bedchamber. God, who has watched over me waking, will protect me in sleep also, and will show me the way to render his sword harmless, as He did that of Ibrâhîm against Isma’îl, even when Isma’îl stretched forth his neck to slaughter.”<sup>2</sup>

Daûd then went into his workshop, and made himself a shirt of mail which covered the upper part of his body

<sup>1</sup> *Sura ii., 252.*

<sup>2</sup> According to Mohammedan belief, it was Ishmael, and not Isaac, whom Abraham was commanded to sacrifice.

from his neck downwards. This shirt of mail was as thin as a hair, clung to his body like wool, and withstood every kind of weapon ; for Daûd had received of God the power to melt iron without fire, to weld it without a hammer, and to fashion it with his hands into any shape he pleased.

Daûd was sleeping peacefully as Talut, guided by his daughter, entered into his bedchamber ; nor did he awake until his father-in-law pressed heavily upon him in his endeavour to pierce with his sword his impenetrable armour. Then he arose, took the sword from Talut's hand, and without uttering any reproach against him, broke it into pieces as a man might crumble up a cake.

On Talut's death Daûd was chosen to be king over Israel, and became not only a mighty warrior, but a good ruler, a great prophet, and a wise judge.

One day the angel Gabril brought him an iron rod and a bell, and said :

“ God sends thee this rod and bell, that it may be easy for thee to maintain justice in Israel, and never to pronounce an unjust sentence. Set this rod up in thy judgment hall and hang the bell in the centre thereof ; place the accuser on one side of the rod, and the accused on the other, and always pronounce in favour of him who by touching the rod is able to draw a note from the bell.”

Daûd rejoiced greatly over this gift, and by its means he was ever victorious who had the right on his side, so that soon none durst bring forward a false charge lest the bell should disclose his evil intentions. One day, however, there came before the king two men, one of whom asserted that he had given a pearl into the other's

keeping, and that this man, whom he had trusted, now refused to restore it. The accused swore that he had returned the pearl. Daûd, as was his habit, caused both to touch the rod, but the bell was silent ; and, being thus at a loss to know which of them spoke the truth, he began to doubt the efficacy of the bell. But, having again ordered both to touch the rod repeatedly, he noticed that whenever the accused approached the rod he gave his stick to his accuser to hold. So he required the latter to touch the rod once more, but himself took hold of the stick, and immediately the bell began to peal. Daûd then caused the stick to be examined : it was hollow, and the disputed pearl was concealed within it.<sup>1</sup>

But after this occurrence, and because Daûd had doubted the power of the rod which God had given him, the rod was taken back into heaven ; and thenceforth he often erred in judgment, until his son Suleyman helped him with his counsel. In him Daûd placed full reliance, consulting him in all difficulties, for in the night of his birth he had heard the angel Gabril call out :

“ Satan’s dominion is at an end, for this night a child is born who will be the Lord of Iblis and all his hosts. Earth, water, and air, with all the living things that are in them, will become his servants ; and he will be gifted with nine-tenths of all the knowledge and wisdom which God has revealed unto mankind, and will understand the language of men, and beasts, and birds.”

<sup>1</sup> The Dome of the Chain in the Haram area takes its name from a chain, once stretched across its entrance, concerning which a similar legend is related.

*A Tradition about Suleyman, the Prophet, the Son of Daûd—The Blessing of God upon them.*

Suleyman was the foremost of all the people, and the essence of the light thrown by the Psalms. The brightness of his countenance surpassed that of the moon ; in truth, it was marvellously white. His two eyebrows were delicate and the pupils of his eyes pools of darkness. Without doubt, he was the most elegant of men in feature, in manner the most urbane, whose speech and utterance were profound and true, and whose kingdom the most glorious among the children of men.

One day a *jinni* related to Suleyman that in the south of Arabia a great queen named Balkis ruled over the land of Saba. This queen, he said, had reigned for some years with wisdom, and dispensed justice to all her people ; she attended the meetings of her Viziers, seated on a golden throne inlaid with precious stones, which the thinnest of veils concealed from the eyes of men ; yet, like many of the kings of that region, she was a worshipper of the sun. Suleyman, on hearing this, took paper and reed, and wrote a letter, in these words :

“ From Suleyman, the son of Daûd, the servant of God, to Balkis, Queen of Saba.

“ In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. A blessing on all those who follow the direction. Be thou also obedient unto my summons, and come before me as a true believer.”

He sealed this letter with musk and pressed his sealing upon it, then gave it to the *jinni*, commanding him to carry it swiftly to the queen. When the *jinni* reached his destination, Balkis was surrounded by her coun-

cillors. On perceiving the mighty seal of Suleyman, she started, and opened the letter hastily; then, after perusing it in silence, she read it aloud to her advisers, and asked their counsel in this grave affair. With one accord they declared themselves ready to follow her into war, should she so decide, but to this Balkis replied :

“ Before I resolve on war, which ever brings much tribulation upon the land, I will send presents to King Suleyman, and will observe the manner in which he receives my embassy. If he is bribed by my gifts, then he is no more than the other kings who are subject to our power ; if, however, he rejects them, then he is a true prophet, to whose belief it were well that we should conform.”

Thereupon, she took five hundred pages, and clad them like girls, curling their hair, too, after the fashion of women, and clad as many girls as pages ; commanding the former to demean themselves before Suleyman as maidens, and the latter, as youths. With them, she sent a thousand carpets, worked beautifully with silver and gold, also a crown set with gems, and many loads of musk, frankincense, amber, and other rare produce of the Yemen. To these she added a locked casket which contained an unpierced pearl and a diamond through which a winding and circuitous hole had been made, and, lastly, a beaker of crystal.

“ Thou, as a true prophet,” she wrote, “ wilt be able to distinguish the youths from the virgins, to divine the contents of the casket, to pierce the pearl, to draw a thread through the diamond, and to fill the beaker with water that has neither come down from heaven nor yet sprung up from the earth.”

All these gifts, together with the letter, she confided into the charge of wise and nimble-minded men, and at their departure gave them this last word of advice :

“If Suleyman receives you with pride and disdain, be not afraid, for these are signs of human weakness ; but if he comes toward you with kindness and condescension, then be on your guard, for by that shall ye know that ye are dealing with a prophet.”

The *jinni* listened to all this, for, until the departure of the ambassadors, he had hovered in the vicinity of the queen. Then, without taking rest, he flew straight to Suleyman’s tent, and related all that he had heard.

Suleyman thereupon commanded the *jinni* to weave him a carpet nine parasangs long, and to spread it southwards before his tent. On the eastern edge of the carpet he erected a lofty wall of gold, and on the west, one of silver, and bade all manner of strange beasts, *jānn*, and demons take their place on either side of the throne. When the ambassadors arrived at the tent, they were plunged into consternation at the sight of wealth and wonders such as they had never imagined. To approach the king, they had to pass through rows of the beasts and *jānn*; but their misgivings ceased when they came face to face with Suleyman (the blessing of God upon him), the King of Kings and the Sultan of Sultans, for he greeted them with great friendliness and, smiling, inquired of them the object of their mission. The ambassadors prostrated themselves before him, and the most venerable among them, handing him the letter, announced that they brought a message from Queen Balkis.

“I know what the letter contains,” replied Suleyman, without opening it, “and likewise what is within the

casket ye have with you. Moreover, by God's power, I will pierce the pearl and draw a thread through the diamond ; but first I will fill the beaker ye have brought with water that has neither come down from heaven nor yet sprung up from the earth, and will distinguish the virgins from your beardless youths."

Commanding his slaves to bring a thousand jugs and basins of silver, he desired of the youths and maidens that they should wash themselves. The former carried the hand on which the water had been poured straight-way to the face, but the latter first wetted the right hand with the water which had been poured into the left, and then washed their faces with both hands. And thus, to the astonishment of the ambassadors, did Suleyman recognize their sex. Next, he ordered a slave to gallop a young and fiery horse through the camp and to return to him with the utmost speed ; when the slave brought back the steed, the sweat was streaming from it so freely that the beaker of crystal was filled in the twinkling of an eye.

"Here," he said, "ye have water that is neither from heaven nor earth."

He then proceeded to pierce the pearl with a stone which the raven had given him ; but the threading of the diamond, the hole through which had been most subtly and crookedly made, caused him great perplexity until a demon brought him a worm which crawled through it, leaving a silken thread in its trail. Suleyman, who was greatly comforted to find that his reputation as a prophet had thus been preserved, inquired of the worm how he could reward it for so great a service ; to which the worm replied that it desired nothing so much as a fine fruit tree for a dwelling-place. Suleyman

gladly granted the request, and settled it in the mulberry tree, which, ever since, has provided the silk-worms with sure refuge and nourishment.

"Ye have now seen," said Suleyman to the ambassadors, "how I have been successful in all the tests with which your queen has tried me. Return, therefore, to Balkis, with your presents, of which I have no need, and declare unto her that unless she accept the true faith and give me her submission, I will invade her land with a force which no mortal power can withstand, and will carry her, a prisoner, to my capital."

The ambassadors accordingly returned, convinced of Suleyman's power, and related all that had happened to Balkis, who agreed with their conclusion. She decided that she herself would visit Suleyman, and immediately made ready for the journey; but before setting out, she locked her throne, which most reluctantly she left behind, in a room which could only be approached after passing through six other rooms, all most carefully locked and guarded by faithful retainers and enclosed within six other palaces which were built one outside the other.

When Balkis, followed by twelve thousand captains, each in command of several thousand men, had approached to within a parasang of Suleyman's camp, the latter asked of his assembled retinue :

"Which of you will bring me the throne of the Queen of Saba before she arrives here as one of the faithful, so that I may take this rare work with right while it is yet the property of an unbeliever?"

Then said a *jinni* of hideous aspect and as large as a mountain : "I will bring it thee, Lord, by noon, before the audience is at an end."

But the time was drawing near, for already Suleyman could see in the distance the dust of the advancing host. Then spake his Vizier Assaf, the son of Barakhia, to whom, through his knowledge of the Ineffable Name of God, nothing was impossible :

" Turn thine eyes towards heaven, and before thou hast cast them down again to the earth, the throne of Balkis will stand before thee."

Suleyman looked up to heaven, while Assaf called upon God by His most Holy Name to send him the throne of Balkis. And immediately the earth opened before him, and the throne rose from out of the ground and remained before Suleyman.

" How great is the goodness of God," cried he ; and, after he had admired the throne, he commanded some of his servants to change it somewhat, for he would see if Balkis would recognize it as her own. So the servants moved some of the animals which were fashioned at the base of the throne, and affixed them in other places. But when the queen arrived, and was asked if her throne bore any resemblance to this one, she replied :

" It seems as though it were the very one."

This answer of the queen and many others proved to Suleyman that she was of great understanding ; for without doubt she had recognized the throne as her own, and yet her reply was of so ambiguous a nature as not to appear a reproach or an accusation. But before he knew her more closely, he was desirous of seeing her body, for many of the demons, fearful lest he should wed her and thus raise up seed more powerful than himself, had told him that although from the waist upward she was built as a woman, her legs were as the legs of asses. So he led her across a great room whose floor

was of crystal, beneath which flowed water, teeming with fish. Balkis had never seen a floor of crystal, and, imagining that she would have to wade through the water, raised her dress up to the knees, so that Suleyman saw to his joy that her feet were the feet of a beautiful woman. Then, having satisfied his eyes, he called to her :

“ Come hither, Balkis, for this is no water, but crystal ; come hither, and acknowledge thy belief in the one and only God.”

Balkis approached his throne, which was raised at the end of the room, and, standing before him, abjured the worship of the sun. Then Suleyman espoused her, and established her once more as Queen of Saba, and passed with her three days out of every month.

And Suleyman reigned many years over Israel, and, when he died, the angels carried him and his seal-ring into a cave whereof no man knoweth ; and there they guard him until the day of resurrection.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE NORTH ROAD. I.

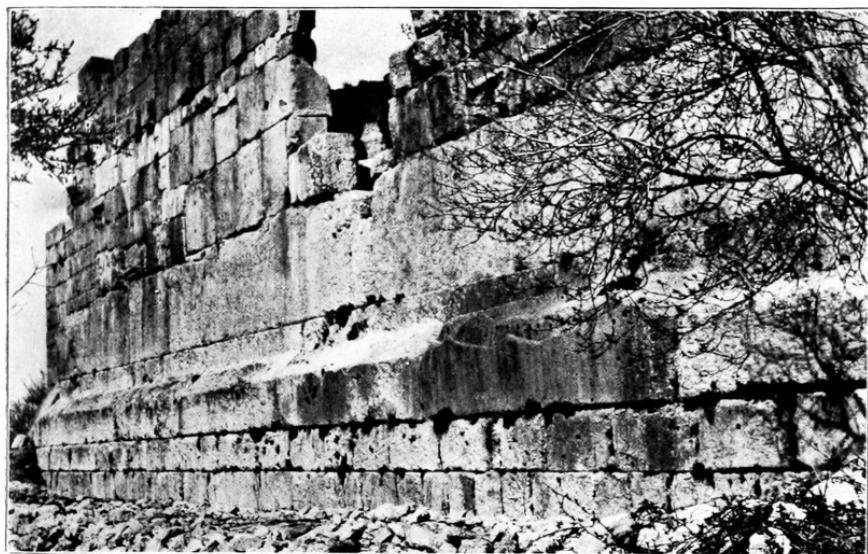
“THE coldest place in Syria is Ba’albakk and the country round, for among the sayings of the people it is related how, when men asked of the cold, ‘Where shall we find thee?’ it was answered, ‘In the Balka’; and when they further said, ‘But if we meet thee not there?’ then the cold added, ‘Verily in Ba’albakk is my home.’”

And in Ba’albek its home is still, although nine hundred years and more have passed since these words were written. Snow lay on the Anti-Libanus, at the back of the town, and snow lay on Lebanon opposite, from whose heights, now all but denuded of their cedars, icy breezes blew across the valley and chilled the veins of mortals. And in Ba’albek, no doubt, its home has always been ; so that it is no cause for wonder that the shivering Coelesyrians worshipped the element which was their foremost benefactor, and made of Ba’albek the great shrine of the sun-god, who was first Ba’al, then Helios, lastly Jupiter Heliopolitanus.

It was to his last impersonation that the Romans erected the buildings which by the delicacy and profusion of their ornament, by the sensuous beauty of their golden temples silhouetted against a sky of Syrian blue, have evoked the admiration of travellers

ever since the western world has been aware of their existence. Yet Ba'albek's most striking feature lies not in these, but in the dimensions of some of the stones of its outer wall, quarried and raised by masons of an age when Rome was still unborn, and forming the substructions of the platform on which the later people, with a later art, built the temple-world which we see to-day. The names and race of those who could move blocks of stone over twenty yards in length, weighing probably a thousand tons apiece, and lay them as truly as if they were so many bricks, are lost in the mists of antiquity ; and those who wrought this great achievement, greater, surely, than the making of handsome temples, have gone, carrying their secret with them. All attempts to explain how these stones were quarried, moved, raised to a considerable height, and then most accurately laid, have ended in vague conjecture. To the many detailed accounts of Ba'albek will not be added here. Suffice it to say that on the vast substructions of the ancient Syrian sun-worshippers the Romans erected at a far later date, in the second and third centuries A.D., an elaborate group of buildings dedicated to Jupiter Heliopolitanus, whom they had dovetailed on to the Ba'al of the earlier shrine, and also to Bacchus, to whose benign influence the Lebanon owed the sweetness of its ever-fruitful vines.

A graduated series of courts, consisting of oblong propylaea, hexagonal forecourt, and square Court of the Altar, leads up to the great temple of Heliopolitan Jupiter, whose six surviving columns are a landmark in all the plain of the Bikâ'. The effect of the long vista of golden-brown buildings, behind which appears the Lebanon, snow-clad, white-clouded, is very wonderful,



SUBSTRUCTIONS, BA'ALBEK, SHOWING BIG STONES



DETAIL; BA'ALBEK



and due as much, perhaps, to the skill and symmetry with which the accessories of the great temple (for such is the purpose of the courts) are marshalled, as to the wealth of ornament and to the incidental beauty of colouring and background. The symmetry is somewhat oddly broken by the temple of Bacchus, which is purposely, no doubt, left out of the scheme to stand alone, sturdily independent, to the left of the main group. It loses nothing, however, by its isolation, but asserts its due importance in not forming a part of the other temple's frame ; and it well deserves a place by itself. Unlike the great temple, it is in good preservation. Corinthian capitals, coffered ceiling, and sculptured portal, if a trifle florid, a trifle baroque, are admirable in their way ; and with the courts, niches, basins, and towers of the other buildings, combine to make of Ba'albek a fine *ensemble* of later Roman architecture, which decadence in the shape of lavish ornamentation has already begun to touch.

It is fully in keeping with the practice of those who succeeded the Romans in the ownership of Syria to contribute their quota to the monuments of their predecessors ; and thus we find a Byzantine basilica, surviving in little more than outline, in the Court of the Altar, and Arab fortifications on the enclosing walls of the acropolis. One who visited Ba'albek a generation back has remarked on the comment which these successive additions to its buildings make on the vaunted progress of the human race. The contribution of each consecutive age is more flimsy, more ephemeral, than that of the age which preceded it ; and the best preserved of its remains are those whose origin is the most remote.

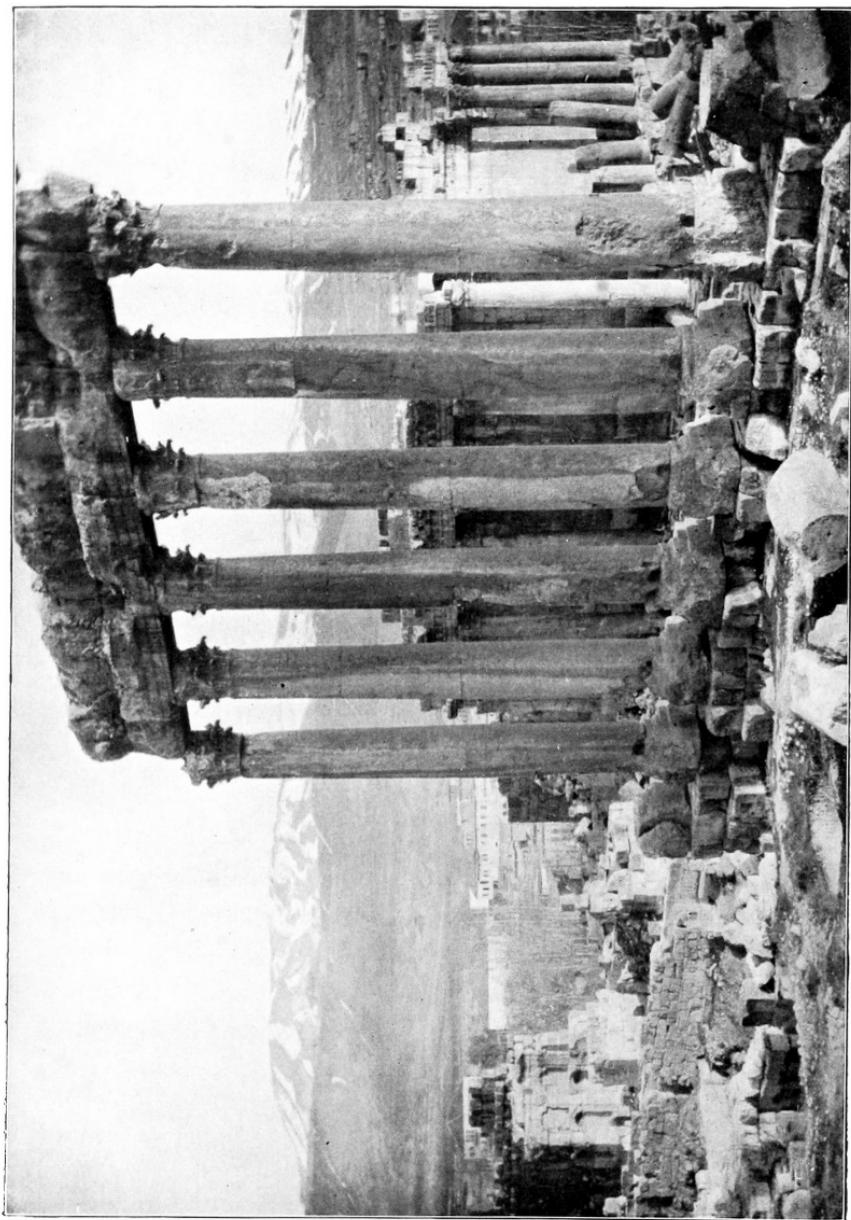
The acropolis stands a little way apart from the town,

and contains, with two exceptions, everything that there is of interest in Ba'albek. Of these exceptions, which symbolize the extremes seen in the temple-area itself, one is a small temple of Venus, contemporary with the other two, ornate, trivial, rococo, but eminently pretty, a characteristic product of the decadence ; the second is a much graver affair. To the south-west of the town are the quarries of the ancient builders ; and here, still adhering to the rock, is a block whose measurements, according to Baedeker's accurate handbook, are 70 feet by 14 feet by 13 feet. But for some great disturbance long since lost in oblivion, some war, some overwhelming invasion, this stone, by means unknown to us to-day, would have joined its companions in the temple's foundation walls. Fate, however, has decreed that it should never leave its matrix, and therein it has decreed wisely ; for in its freedom from surmounting courses, with all its dimensions laid bare, it illustrates the more clearly the dauntless enterprise of an heroic race of builders.

Twenty miles east of Ba'albek, on the road from Damascus to Palmyra, is the little cluster of Anti-Libanus villages—Ma'lula (the village of bakers), Bakha'a, and Jubb'Adin—where dialects of the old Syriac or Aramaic tongue, varying slightly in each village, are still the language of the people ; and three days' journey beyond these is Ba'albek's sister-city, Palmyra. We resisted the temptation to make these digressions from our route, and, in order to cover with economic speed a relatively uninteresting stretch of country, entrained in the *Chemin de fer Damas-Hama et Prolongements* for the city of Homs.

Homs, the ancient Emesa, is the southernmost of the

BA ALBEK, TEMPLE OF JUPITER AND ANTI-LIBANUS





three big inland towns, the others being Hama and Aleppo, which form the backbone of the western portion of the great North Syrian plain, now beginning to open out before us. Lebanon and Anti-Libanus disappear ; and, while the former is continued by the Nosayriyeh Mountains, a coastal range which connects it with the Taurus, to the east there spreads the fertile but only partially cultivated flat land, bounded on the north by the mountains of Kurdistan, and extending across Mesopotamia to the frontier-ranges of Persia.

In the middle ages Homs was a place of considerable importance, and is now a town of some 60,000 inhabitants ; of the old Arab writers who have described its people, some declare that they are handsome, others, that they are witless, others, again, that they are both. Neither of these qualities were to us peculiarly apparent ; their most noticeable feature, in so far as we had occasion to become aware of their characteristics, was an inordinate and apparently unquenchable curiosity. I regard the power of a stranger to inspire this feeling in Syria as nothing short of a calamity to himself ; for Syrians, particularly the lower-class Christians and dwellers in towns, are as shameless in displaying it as the crowds at American society weddings. They are totally lacking in that consideration which I have experienced, when travelling in the interior of West Africa, at the hands of the 'barbarous' natives, from comparison with whom these heirs to millennia of civilization would most indignantly shrink. It is true that after we left Palestine for regions less frequented by tourists, our passage through the villages and hamlets was no longer accompanied by clamourers after *bakhshish* ; but there is little doubt that to be an object of constantly sustained and

actively expressed interest is more productive of discomfort than to be a potential object of plunder. It is no exaggeration to say that crowds, varying in numbers from a few hundreds to some three thousand, formed a living barrier round our camp at Homs from sunrise to sunset during every day of our sojourn, and would have invaded our very tents but for the restraining hands, and *qurbash*, of the sorely tried guard. Nor could we walk abroad to see the sights without a following of cumbersome dimensions; so that our stay in this otherwise eminently pleasant town was attended by the feeling of malaise inseparable from being under close and incessant observation. Sometimes, while resting in one's tent in the afternoon, one would observe a slight movement at the bottom of the tent-flap, to discover a pair of beady eyes, whose owner has eluded the vigilance of the zaptiehs, greedily devouring oneself and one's surroundings. After a time these eyes became an obsession; and one would wake up in the middle of the night with the uncomfortable sensation that from every side of the tent equally beady pairs were avidly focussed on one's defenceless person.

Homs is, as I have said, an eminently pleasant town. All its houses are built entirely of black basalt, which gives to the city a curious, although very neat, appearance; and its streets, strange to say, are paved with stone, the just pride of Homs for many centuries past. Its bazaars, much frequented by the landed gentry and peasantry of the neighbourhood, have a goodly supply of the beautiful silk whose preparation is the principal industry of the inhabitants; and outside the town the Orontes, as yet young and slender, meanders lazily northwards past leafy arbours where on sunny afternoons

the towns-folk enjoy their *keif*. Of monuments, Homs has none, unless be so reckoned the *tell*,<sup>1</sup> sole exception to the unbroken flat of its surroundings, on which are the scanty remains of its ancient citadel. The place was blown up with such thoroughness by Ibrâhim Pasha that only the most meagre fragments remain of a fortress long famous for its strength, a fortress of importance, no doubt, as far back as the time when Heliogabalus, that eminent burgher of Homs, was ministering at the shrine of the local Ba'al.

This crapulous and ignoble individual, *né* Bassianus, is said to have owed his election as Roman Emperor to the fact that the soldiers of Caracalla detected in him some resemblance to that lamented *divus*. The reign of Homs's solitary contribution to the roll of the Ever August, shedding little lustre on his birthplace, his electors, and himself, has preserved him, by its orgies, from a more profitable oblivion; but the elevation of so obscure a provincial to the highest position of the ancient world is interesting in the parallel which it offers to the Empire which has succeeded Rome in the rule of its eastern dependencies. The Ottoman Empire, with all its faults, possesses one conspicuous, and to those unacquainted with its many contradictions, doubtless surprising merit: namely, that the highest posts in its service are attainable by all its subjects of Turkish race, irrespective of rank or riches. In accordance with the traditions of its nomadic, military beginnings, when personal qualities alone won the right to lead, every Turk, however humble his origin, however small and distant the place of his birth, has as good a chance

<sup>1</sup>A hill, in this region usually flat-topped and of artificial construction.

of becoming *Mushir* or *Vizier* as the *Effendiler* of Constantinople.

Once there lived in Homs a certain Syriac bishop, ambitious, and well versed in the arts of intrigue. This astute prelate cherished the hope of becoming, at the next vacancy, Patriarch of the Syriac, or Jacobite Church ; and, in order to equip himself with the sinews of war, undertook a visit to England, accompanied by a picturesquely clad deacon, for the ostensible purpose of collecting money for a printing press. He was befriended by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and succeeded in raising £5000, with which he returned to Homs; but years passed, and the printing press did not materialize. At last the Patriarch died, and our friend prepared to accept the call to a higher sphere of usefulness ; but to his consternation he was passed over in favour of the abbot of the big Jacobite monastery near Mosul. In great disgust he retired to Diarbekr, where he entered into negotiations with the Roman Catholics, promising that if received by them, as a Uniat, he would induce his flock to follow his example. So he was accepted, on the strength of this undertaking, as Syriac Uniat bishop, and no sooner was he thus installed than he schemed to be made Patriarch of his newly adopted church. Unfortunately, his people did not follow him to the extent which he had led the Roman Catholics to believe ; and the latter, feeling that they had been tricked, declined to do anything further for him. Again foiled in his ambition to become Patriarch at any price, and of anything, he commenced silently to make preparations ; and, when they were completed, suddenly returned to the fold, did penance at the Mosul monastery, made his peace with the Patriarch,



PERISTYLE, TEMPLE OF BACCHUS, BA'ALBEK



FRAGMENTS, BA'ALBEK



and showed such sincere signs of repentance that the old man not only forgave him freely, but was actually prevailed upon to designate him as his successor. And his successor he duly became, managing his church since then, it is reported, with all the skill which he had shown in the management of his own career. This story illustrates, not inaptly, a phase of ecclesiastical tactics as still practised in the East; and was recalled to my mind by seeing, not long ago, the following paragraph in a well-known London morning paper :

“The Patriarch of Syria was present at even-song in St. Paul’s Cathedral, and occupied a seat in the choir near Archdeacon Sinclair, who was the preacher. The aged prelate is on a visit to this country to invoke financial help towards repairing his historic church and school, and to provide a new printing press—all these having been damaged by hordes of fanatics who descended from the neighbouring mountains. Thirty-four years ago, when Syrian Bishop of Jerusalem, he came to this country, and was received by Archbishop Tait. On that occasion the first donation he received towards his church was £50 from Queen Victoria, and he was also presented by her Majesty with a personal badge to be worn by him.”

## CHAPTER XI.

### IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THE NOSAYRÎYEH.

FROM Homs we rode to Qal'at el-Hosn, a Crusaders' castle in the Nosayrîeh Mountains, and thereby made in a single day, so vivid are the contrasts in this strange Syrian land, the transition from a prosaic provincial town in an unromantic plain to a stronghold of the thirteenth century, dominating mountain fastnesses even now considered to be 'unsafe.' For some four hours after leaving Homs we travelled along the Tripoli road,<sup>1</sup> one of the few good roads in Syria, and the only one, probably, which pays its way. Its traffic is brisk, and its tax on every vehicle passing between Tripoli and Homs no less a sum than six mejidiyehs, equivalent, according as you adopt the rate of exchange of the Government, of Jerusalem, of Beirût, of Damascus, or of Jaffa, to nineteen shillings, twenty-three shillings, twenty-three and twopence, twenty-four shillings, or twenty-six shillings respectively ; from which calculations, achieved with no little labour, it will be seen that financial problems of magnitude beset Turkey's visitors as well as her statesmen. To the left of the road were a number of shallow pools, and behind them the lake of Homs, abounding in fish ; while overhead there circled,

<sup>1</sup> A railway has since been built along it.

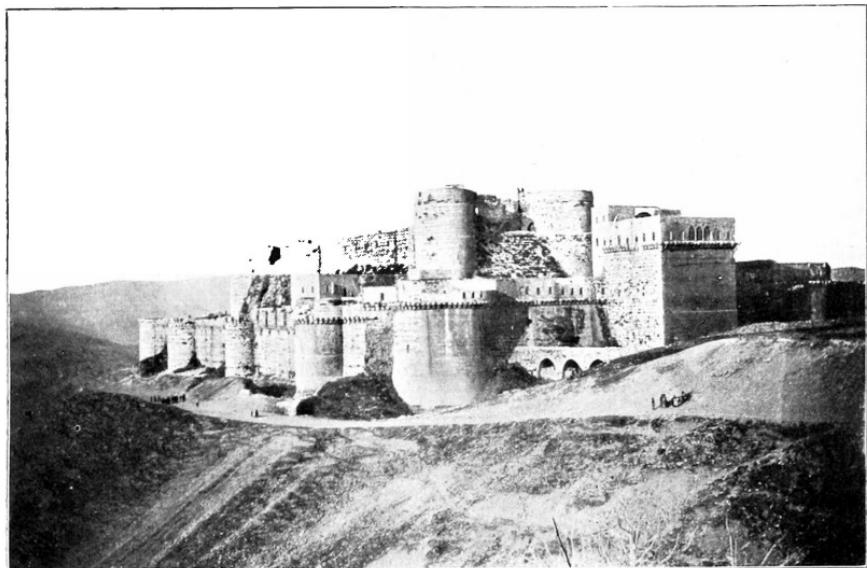
with the discipline of perfectly drilled soldiers, gigantic flocks of storks, who from time to time would abandon their evolutions and descend for a footbath in the water. Near El-Hadîdeh we left the road, branched off sharply to the north, and pursued a villainous and marshy track which led into the hill country, and afforded such bad going for the caravan that we were compelled to leave it behind. So we rode on alone, and directed the camp to make its way as best it could to the foot of the mountain, first of the higher peaks of the Jebel Nosayrîyeh, from which the Qal'a frowns down upon the surrounding country.

We arrived there late in the afternoon ; and as we wended our way up the steep ascent to the summit, we could see the inmates issuing, as they might have done in the days of old, forth from the great castle gate, to watch the approach of the invaders. But if they, unused to the sight of strangers, had cause to wonder, how much the more had we ? For as we toiled up the final incline we saw what distance had hitherto partially obscured, the full magnitude of this truly astonishing fabric. On the highest point of the hill, an L-shaped hill 2450 feet above sea-level, commanding with unrivalled effect the defile, all-important to the Crusaders, through which was the only communication between Homs and Hama on the one hand, and Tripoli and Tartûs on the other, we beheld a castle of vast extent and apparently in perfect preservation. Within its massive outer wall, straddling the ridge with crenellated bastions, rose another and higher enceinte, and above this, again, emerged the three mighty towers of the keep. The Qaimaqam, attended by his retinue, was awaiting us outside the gate, and, bidding us

Hama and from the Assassins at Masyad. But in 1271 the Mameluke Sultan Baibars captured it after a siege of seven weeks, and commemorated the event by an inscription near the moat, which, flanked by lions, reads as follows :

“ In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Hath been commanded the restoration of this blessed castle in the reign of our Master, the Sultan El-Melek ed-Daher, the wise, the just, the champion of the holy war, the pious, the defender of frontiers, the victorious, the pillar of the world and of the faith, the father of victory Baibars . . . , and this on the . . . day of . . . ”

Meanwhile, in the tower, they were preparing for our entertainment. An Effendi who owned land in the neighbourhood was on a visit to the Qaimaqam ; and after the necessary introductions had been made, we sat down to a preliminary snack of coffee and *hors d'œuvres*. The Qaimaqam's residence was typically Turkish. Had it been occupied by people of any other nation, its occupants would, instinctively, have set about to make the best of their material, and to render the ancient tower as comfortable and homelike as circumstances would permit. Not so the Turk. In him, after close on six centuries of comparatively settled existence, the nomad spirit has survived with undiminished force ; and he is ready at any time to change his habitat for another with expedition and without demur. Consequently there is nothing in his houses to indicate that he regards them as permanent dwellings. They possess neither luxuries nor any of the things which we call ‘ fixtures ’ ; they are never repaired until actually on the point of collapse ; and although everything inside them



QAL'AT EL-HOSN



CHAPTER-HOUSE, QAL'AT EL-HOSN



is scrupulously clean, only the indispensable and the easily portable do they contain. And so, here, the roof leaked, the wind blew through the broken window panes and through the chinks of a wall innocent of paper, into rooms bare of all but the scantiest furniture. Only a few good rugs, spread on the floor, gave a touch of comfort and of warmth, and served as a reminder that this land has at least one admirable handicraft.

Everybody who knows his *Book of Snobs* will remember how Mr. Snob, while employed on a delicate diplomatic mission in Constantinople, was banqueted together with his Russian opponent, Count de Diddloff, by Leckerbiss Pasha, Chief Galeongee of the Porte ; and how he got the better of his rival because he was able to swallow the selected morsels of meat which, following oriental custom, the Pasha with his own fingers placed in his guests' mouths, with greater appreciation of the compliment and of the succulence of the gobbets than the more fastidious Count. Whoever does not, and who would fain read, in more entertaining language than the author of this book is capable of, a description of a feast such as our Qaimaqam in his hospitality produced, should turn to the aforementioned work ; for in like manner to the Galeongee did Ahmed Bey place in the mouth of his right-hand neighbour, who is telling the tale, the juiciest pieces of mutton from his own plate, rolling them up for the purpose into immense pills with the help of rice, fat, and the various condiments, such as onions, pine-kernels, cinnamon, and garlic, with which the sheep sacrificed at our arrival had been stuffed. And as, in continuation of old Turkish custom, no drinks were produced until the meal was over, I was unable to do

as the Count de Diddloff and drown the pills in a pint of French brandy. The dinner, however, was excellent, despite the attentions of the Qaimaqam and the absence of all eating utensils. First came *poulet au riz*, which in Turkey is always good, followed by a dish of spinach, whose flavour would have made a French chef turn its colour with envy, but which presented certain difficulties until the hand had trained itself to assume the form and functions of a spoon. After the spinach, the sheep already alluded to made their appearance as *pièces de résistance*, to be removed by wild artichokes, which were fresh and sweet after the rich and heavy mutton. Dessert consisted of a sour cream, called *leben*, and oranges, after which the company rose, persons who were thirsty finding glasses of water on the sideboard. Altogether it was a very cheery meal. The Qaimaqam was the soul of geniality, delighted to have someone from the outer world to talk to ; and, considering the remoteness and isolation of the locality, the quality of the repast was pleasantly surprising. Moreover, to remove any inconvenience which might result from eating with our fingers, the old negro slave, whom the Qaimaqam had brought from Mecca, washed our hands in rosewater between every course. Ahmed Bey was intelligent as well as hospitable, a very good specimen of the higher Turkish official. His knowledge of French was remarkable for a man who had never left Turkey ; he took an interest in the affairs of other countries besides his own ; and he contemplated the purchase of a camera. He came of a distinguished Kurdish family, being the son and grandson of a Mutesarrif, the brother-in-law of an Imperial Chamberlain, and own brother to that important functionary, the Director of

the Mecca pilgrimage, the Emir ul-Hajj ; and he entertained reasonable hopes of speedy promotion. "Ce n'est pas un poste pour un homme comme moi," he said ; and it was easy to sympathize with him in his desire for a change. In all his qaza of several hundred little villages clustering on the slopes of the Jebel Nosayrîyeh there was no one above the status of a village headman, no town to compare with the mighty ruin in which he lived. For company, he had his family, the Imâm, the Qadi, and the Commandant of a small detachment of troops ; for recreation, an occasional day's shooting ; for intellectual refreshment, nothing. One month's leave every year, which he spent in Damascus, gave him his only means of access to the world at large ; and thus it will be seen that, like the policeman's, a cultured Qaimaqam's lot is not always a happy one.

Rugs had meanwhile been spread for us in the reception room, and thither, after further conversation, we retired, and slept. On the morrow my companions descended at an early hour to the camp, which, with many a *ya'llah* on the part of the muleteers, had arrived late on the evening before at the foot of the hill ; while I remained at the castle. It was arranged that the Qaimaqam should lunch with us at noon, and that I should accompany him to the camp ; in the interval, I proposed to ride to the monastery of Mar Jirjis, or St. George, which I had seen from the tower on the previous day. Having to wait some time for my horse, I returned with the Qaimaqam to the reception room, and there had an opportunity of observing something of Syrian etiquette in a form unadulterated by western influences. The room was, as usual, divided into *diwân*

and *lîwân*, the *dîwân* being the back part, and the honourable part, of the room, and raised a step above the front part, or *lîwân*. On the *dîwân* sits the master of the house with his guests, while servants and dependants stand on the *lîwân*, below the step. Round the three sides of the *dîwân* are placed seats or cushions, that of the host being in the middle, opposite the door, and the places of greatest honour being those nearest to his. On this particular morning the Qaimaqam appeared to be holding a levée. Clad in an '*abayeh* of the finest camel hair, richly embroidered with gold, below which could be discerned a dressing-gown, quilted and bright, he sat in his chair, smoking endless cigarettes ; beside him there sat and smoked the Effendi and myself. Presently the notabilities already alluded to made their appearance one by one : the Imâm, the Qadi, and the Commandant of the small detachment of troops. All left their slippers on the *lîwân*, not excluding the Commandant, for Turkish officers, when not on parade, are apt to combine full uniform and sword with a certain *négligé* as to the feet.<sup>1</sup> As each one entered, he saluted host and assembly by carrying his right hand from his heart to his forehead, and all those already in the room returned the salute in like manner. As soon as they had resumed their seats, the new arrival rose and bowed once more. Similarly, whenever anyone left the room, he saluted, and everybody rose and saluted in return. Some village Agas, carrying enormous curved swords, completed the party, and the Qaimaqam was kept busy calling out '*ya weled*' (O boy !), a summons to his elderly retainer to bring the coffee. For coffee is one of

<sup>1</sup> Not, of course, in Constantinople, where the officers equal in elegance those of Vienna and Berlin.

the essentials of Turkish social life. Not to offer coffee to a guest is an insult unthinkable ; and for a guest to take his leave before his coffee has come is conduct comparable to that of a man who, arriving at a house where he has been invited to dinner, and finding that dinner is late, becomes impatient and goes away before the meal is served. Consequently the host can regulate fairly exactly the duration of his visitors' calls, one of many proofs that in some respects the East is more practical than the West ; and when he wishes to show somebody particular courtesy, he delays his departure by retarding the appearance of the coffee. This, of course, has its drawbacks if the visitor is in a hurry, as I myself found on that very morning ; for by the time that my horse had arrived and I had reached Mar Jirjis, more than an hour's ride from the castle, I realized that, in order to return there and bring the Qaimaqam to the camp by noon, I would have to curtail very considerably my visit to the monastery. When, therefore, I observed that the Abbot was taking pleasure in my conversation and was delaying the arrival of the *congé de partir*, my agony was intense, until, at the risk of offending against all rules social, canonical, and monastic, I clamoured loudly for coffee. The Abbot was a stately personage and of noble girth. Like Saint John the Evangelist, he was followed about wherever he went by a retinue of two Carpaccionesque grey partridges, and like one of the eleven Saints Cyril who figure in the Major Kalendar, he was a Cretan ; whether or not he was afflicted with the national peculiarity I did not discover. His monastery was an imposing and fortress-like pile of golden limestone, standing on a gentle slope above the stream, and embowered in the usual grove of cypresses and

olives. The dome of its church, large and whitewashed, could, as already remarked, be seen distinctly from Qal'at el-Hosn ; in its picturesque courtyard a number of men and women were lounging peacefully under the arcades. The place seemed prosperous and in good repair. The Abbot's reception-room was spacious and well furnished, the floor was covered with old and costly rugs, and in the middle stood the Abbot's chair of state, richly and curiously carved. Twelve monks formed the establishment, all Syrians except the Abbot, and helped to minister to the spiritual needs of twenty-five neighbouring Christian villages belonging to the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch. Be it mentioned, in passing, that the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, in conformity with the practice adopted by the Latin, the Jacobite, the Syriac Uniat, the Maronite, the Melchite, and such other Patriarchs of Antioch as may have escaped my notice, is an absentee prelate. He neither inhabits nor visits his titular city, but resides in Damascus, where, boycotted by his brothers of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, because he is a Syrian and not a Greek, he comforts himself, we will hope, with the reflection that, although not privileged to be a Hellene, he is and remains The Most Blessed and Holy Patriarch of the Divine City Antioch, Syria, Arabia, Cilicia, Iberia, Mesopotamia, and All the East ; Father of Fathers and Pastor of Pastors. Sufficient consolation, one would think !

Having seen the church and crypt, and taken my leave of the Abbot, I hurried back to the castle, very late, and confident that I should find the Qaimaqam ready to come down to the camp. But here I reckoned without Turkish etiquette. For a man in the Qaimaqam's position to be punctual at a meal would be very

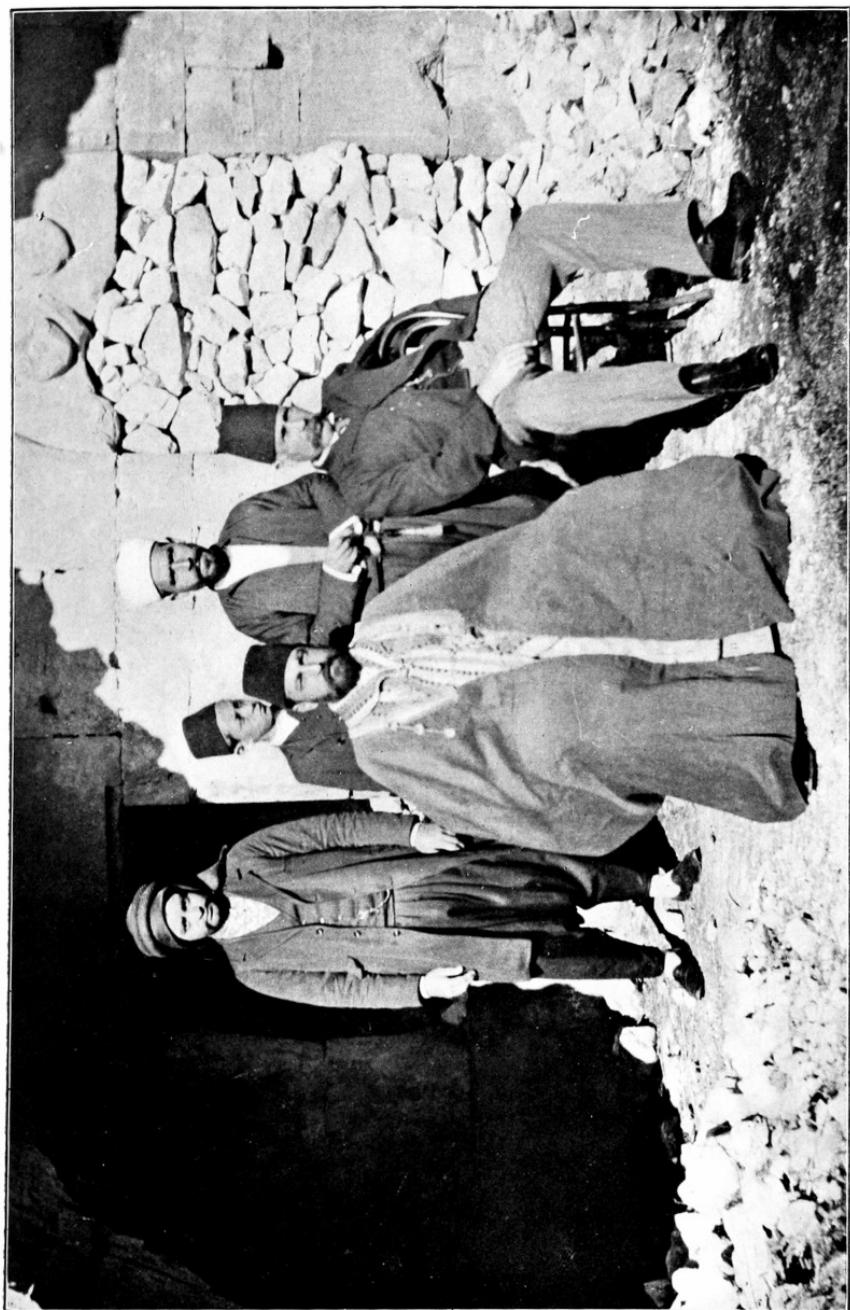
derogatory to his dignity ; and so I had to sit and wait while he assessed the Verghi tax of his district for the coming financial year, not that he ever did so, under normal circumstances, until the year was over, but merely that he might emphasize his importance by the delay. Finally I got him to move, but now another unpleasant aspect of eastern custom was revealed to me. It appears that when you desire to show your host particular regard, you do so by displaying an unbounded confidence in his hospitality ; consequently that soul of politeness, the Qaimaqam, had collected his son, the Effendi, and eleven retainers to do honour to our lunch. Hastily a runner was sent ahead to prepare the camp for the invasion ; and thus, fortunately, there was room and food for all. I sat next to the Qaimaqam, and constantly popped things from my plate into his mouth. I found this a novel and fascinating diversion, which was greatly heightened by the Qaimaqam's very evident gratification ; and I have often regretted since that the custom might seem *outré* at home. At trying dinner-parties such a manœuvre would be of inestimable value in filling conversational blanks due to a reserved neighbour, or the mouths of those neighbours whose reserve was insufficient.

After lunch, our camp prepared for departure. The Effendi made noises to show his repletion, the omission of which would have been a reflection on the quality of the meal, a messenger was despatched to Homs with a telegram to the Sultan, thanking him for his representative's hospitality, a photograph of the party taken (at the Qaimaqam's request) to commemorate the festive occasion ; and then we said good-bye.

It was late that night when we reached our destination, Bârin, the Mons Ferrandus of the Crusades. Throughout the afternoon we were travelling over the mountains, partly along stony tracks, but more often over country absolutely trackless, true robber-country, most congenial to the habits of the marauding bands which infest it. Towards sunset, as we crossed the summit of the Dahr el-Quseir, a rounded, barren knoll, we passed two cairns of loosely-piled stones, marking the graves of a robber pair, father and son, who, after terrorizing the district for many years, had met their just doom a decade or so ago at the hands of the exasperated peasantry. The population of Syria is exceptionally mixed. The Syrians proper, themselves the descendants of a combination of races, have intermingled to a considerable extent with the Arabs of the towns and with the settled peasantry; and it is the latter who suffer so much at the hands of the nomadic or Beduin Arabs in such districts in which they meet. The Beduin derive much of their substance from preying upon the poor, patient, and timid *hâdari*, who are often content to purchase at a fixed annual rate immunity from their depredations, much as do the Sicilian peasantry when blackmailed by the Mafiosi. There comes a time, however, when even the worm will turn, as is witnessed by the mounds on the Dahr el-Quseir; no peasant ever passes them, even now, without adding his quota, launching, as he casts a stone on each, an ample curse against the souls of the malefactors.

Bârin, village and castle, the second containing the first, and no better preserved than Kokab el-Hawa, is inhabited by the strange people who give their name to

THE QAIMMAQM OF QAL'AT EL-JIOSN AND HIS SUITE





this mountain range. The Nosayrîyeh<sup>1</sup> are a truculent lot, and their reputation is even worse than that of the Beduin as robbers and oppressors of the weak. But in justice to them it must be borne in mind that they are hated by orthodox Moslems, who rarely lose an opportunity of blackening the name of this ancient and singular tribe.

Mohammedanism failed, no less than Christianity, to reach maturity without throwing off, from time to time, sparks which rekindled the dying embers of more ancient religions and philosophies, and in fusion with these flickered up for a while, in some cases keeping alive until now, chaotic combinations of reason, of mysticism, of formalism, of secrecy, of magic. In the West, in an age when the beliefs of men were in ferment, Gnostics and Manichaeans, and, later, their mediaeval successors, the Cathars, Patarenes, and Albigenses, illustrated the amalgam of Christianity with the elements of dualism, oriental philosophy, and ancient paganism; and through the Bogomils have perpetuated to this day among some of the Russian *Raskolniki* a strange mixture of ill-assorting beliefs. In Syria such elements, tinged, not with Christianity, but with a Moslem heresy, form the basis of the religions of the Nosayrîyeh and the Druses.

The origin of the former has given rise to no little speculation. According to one view, their name is derived from *nasrâni*, Nazarene or Christian, whence they were sometimes known as 'Little Christians'; a more accepted theory attributes the foundation of their

<sup>1</sup> This name is sometimes, but erroneously, written Ansayrîyeh. The mistake has probably arisen through the fact that in common parlance Syrians usually elide its first vowel.

religion to the ninth-century Shiah Sheikh Mohammed ibn-Nosair. But M. René Dussaud<sup>1</sup> has shown conclusively, I think, that they were a race apart in Syro-Phoenician times, and in support quotes no less an authority than Pliny, who mentions the city of Apamea as "separated by the river Marsyas (Orontes) from the tetrarchy of the Nazerines."<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt that the paganism of the Phoenicians still predominates in the beliefs of the Nosayrîyeh. They adore sun, moon, and sky, worship not in mosques but in high places, and pay great reverence even now to one of the most famous of Phoenician sanctuaries, the intermittent spring near Mar Jirjis which has gone by the name of the Sabbath Fountain since Josephus declared that its waters flowed every seventh day. At one time, no doubt, such beliefs were common not only to the inhabitants of the Syrian Coast, but also to the peoples of Haran and Palmyra; but whereas the latter eventually came entirely under the influence either of Christianity or of Islam, the Nosayrîyeh were protected by the isolation of their mountains from contact with foreign ideas. The Arab invasion left them practically untouched; the Crusaders, while scattering castles over their country, in no sense modified their religion. It was left for the Assassins to do this when they established themselves in their territory during the first half of the twelfth century; and the Nosayrîyeh faith at the present time is, therefore, a blend of the paganism of Aradus with the Shiah heresy of the Isma'ilîyeh.

It would be too long a task to describe this blend in detail. Briefly, the Nosayrîyeh have derived from the

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, Paris, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Nat.*, v., 81.

Isma'ilîyeh, like the Druses, the important distinction between initiated and uninitiated. The bulk of the people are of the latter class, and only to the select few is the full knowledge vouchsafed. To the category of the uninitiated also belong all women, but the Nosayrîyeh dissent from the Druse theory that the souls of women perish with their bodies ; their belief in the metempsychosis of the male soul is of very ancient origin. They have, however, reduced to three the nine degrees of the Isma'ilîyeh initiation, although adding a wealth of ritual entirely unknown to the latter, which comprises, among other things, the ceremonial drinking of wine. This practice, which occurs at the third and last degree, has given rise to a belief that they celebrate a form of communion. The neophyte, who must be the child of Nosayrîyeh parents, is prepared and presented for initiation by a sponsor, who may not be his father or any near relative. The initiate is regarded as being born anew,<sup>1</sup> and the sponsorship establishes between him and his sponsor a very close spiritual relationship ; the bond is so strong that he is precluded from wedding the latter's daughters, now become in the spiritual sense his sisters.<sup>2</sup>

Needless to say, the name of 'Alî figures very prominently in the part of the Nosayrîyeh religion derived from the Assassins. It is a fairly safe rule to measure the unorthodoxy of a Moslem sect by the extent to which it exalts 'Alî ; and among the Nosayrîyeh he is not only regarded as being greater than Mohammed, he

<sup>1</sup> The same fiction is maintained with regard to the initiates in the West African Porro Bush.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the law of the Orthodox Church which prohibits marriage between any person and the child of his or her god-parent.

is actually confounded with the very God-head itself. But no Nosayriyah knows who 'Alî really was. To them he is nothing more than a word, a symbol ; and, indeed, it has often been the fate of the unfortunate fourth Khalif to be but the new name under which superficially converted Mohammedans have continued to worship their ancient deities.<sup>1</sup> It is now time, however, to say something of the Assassins, whose chief town, Masyad, we reached in three hours from Bârin ; and in order to make their origin clear, it will be necessary to continue from a previous chapter the history of the Mohammedan schism.

It will be remembered that when the Omayyad Mu'âwiya established the Suni Khalifate at Damascus, the Persians, rejecting both his religious and his political authority, founded the Shiah branch of the Moslem faith, which glorified the name and family of 'Alî. The duration of the Omayyad Khalifate was brief. After 89 years of existence it was overthrown by the 'Abbâsids, descendants of 'Abbâs, the Prophet's paternal uncle, who established their capital at Baghdad, and there reigned as Khalifs from 750 until 1258. In that year Baghdad was captured by the Mongul Hulagu, and with its fall the eastern Khalifate, as a state, expired. A scion of the 'Abbâsids succeeded in making his escape to Egypt, where he was proclaimed Khalif by Sultan Baibars under the name of Hâkim bi-amri'llâh ;<sup>2</sup> but the Khalifate which he and his descendants henceforth enjoyed in Cairo as long as Egypt remained independent, was a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*.

<sup>2</sup> Not to be confused with the Fâtimite Khalif of the same name who built the dome of the Qubbet es-Sakhra and founded the religion of the Druses.

spiritual dignity only. It was a Moslem Papacy bereft of its Temporal Power, and existed by and under the protection of Moslem Kings. Nevertheless, the title of Khalif ensured to its bearers the deep respect of all Sunis; and when the Turkish Sultan Selim I. took Cairo in 1517 and incorporated Egypt in his dominions, he regarded it as of such value that he acquired its reversion from the last 'Abbâsid Khalif, Motawakkil. Since then the Khalifate has remained an appanage of the Ottoman Sultans; and, as being borne by the rulers of the principal Mohammedan state, has recovered very largely its original significance. 'Abdu'l Hamid in particular owed much of his influence to its judicious exploitation; and although the claims of the House of 'Othman to it are not flawless, being rejected, for example, by the Moors, they are fully accepted by the vast majority of Sunis.

Meanwhile the Shias, who use the term Imâm in preference to that of Khalif, remained constant to the family of 'Alî; and were divided among themselves chiefly on the question as to which particular branch of his descendants had inherited the dignity. Their main body, the Imâmiyeh, whom we may regard as the exponents of Shiah orthodoxy, believe in a succession of twelve Imâms, who are 'Alî, Hasan, Husein, and Husein's direct descendants from father to son, ending with Mohammed 'Abu'l Qâsim. The latter is called the Imâm al-Mahdi, and is believed to be not dead, but only withdrawn from the world; he will reappear in the last days to reign over it for seven years with equity and justice, assuming the title of Mahdi or 'Director.' In the course of time not a few pretenders have appeared, claiming to be the Mahdi. The best

known to Englishmen, and perhaps the most successful, was the Mahdi Mohammed Ahmed of Dongola, under whose tyranny and that of his successor the Sudan was for so long the scene of bloodshed and desolation. Of another, Baha'u'llah, and of the remarkable influence exercised by his teachings, something will be said later. The Shiah heresies, however, do not recognize all of the twelve Imâms ; and their most powerful sect, that of the Isma'ilîyeh, breaks away from the orthodox after the death of Ja'far as-Sâdiq, the sixth. Ja'far had disinherited his eldest son Isma'il in favour of the next son Mûsa for being seen in a state of drunkenness ; and while the Imâmiyeh accepted Mûsa as seventh Imâm, a number of dissidents, mystics, and others, adhered to Isma'il, arguing that his intoxication showed that he attached greater weight to the hidden precepts of Islam than to the observance of its outward formalities !

The Isma'ilîyeh emerged into prominence outside their native Persia in the tenth century, when one of their number founded the Fâtimite dynasty in North Africa. Their influence was increased by the arrival at the Cairene court of 'Omar Khayyâm's schoolfellow of Naishâpûr, the *Dai* Hasan ben Sabbâh. This remarkable man soon gained great ascendancy over the Fâtimite Khalif Mostansir, but was eventually compelled to leave Egypt by his enemies. He then established himself after many adventures in the mountain fastness of Alamût, south of the Caspian Sea, where he organized his followers into the secret society of the Assassins. The religious principles of the Assassins differed in no wise from those of their parent society, the Isma'ilîyeh. As with these, a rigid observance of Islam was enforced, for the sake of discipline, on the masses ; while the

initiated, the ruling caste, were secretly scoffers, cynics, unbelievers, ignoring and rejecting every moral and religious law. At the head of their organization stood the ruler, the *Sheikh al-Jebal*, the Chief or 'Old Man' of the Mountains; next under him were three grand priors, *Dai al-Kirbal*, who ruled the three provinces of the Assassins. Next came the *Dais* or priors, who were fully initiated; the *Refiqs*, who were in process of initiation; and then the *Fedais*, that is to say, the 'devoted ones,' young men employed to carry out the secret murders whereby the chiefs of the Assassins rid themselves of their enemies, and perpetuated in half the languages of Europe the sinister associations of their name. The distinctive characteristic of the *Fedais* was their unquestioning obedience. When about to be employed, they were intoxicated with an opiate of hemp leaves, *hashish* (hence the word Assassin), and in the blissful condition induced by the drug were conducted into the Sheikh's gardens. Here, where every worldly delight was at hand, they were granted that foretaste of Paradise which made them blind tools of their ruler's will; and the conviction that, should they lose their lives in the execution of their mission, those joys would be renewed to them in the next world gave them an indifference to death by which they carried out murders of the most fantastic audacity.<sup>1</sup> In the twelfth century a Syrian branch of the Assassins was established in the Nosayrîyeh Mountains; and from their two walled towns, Masyad and Qadmûs, the *Fedais* glided forth into the camps of both Moslems and Crusaders. After a while the activities of the Assassins assumed a more vulgar tinge. They no longer confined themselves to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Marco Polo, Bk. I., ch. xxii.

despatching their own enemies ; they undertook, for a consideration, commissions from outside, and in addition to being a religious sect became an organization of hired murderers. By this time the Syrian Assassins had become independent of those in Persia ; but the thirteenth century saw the end of both. Hulagu in the East, Baibars in the West, extinguished their nefarious principalities ; and the survivors were merged in the main body of the Isma'ilîyeh. In Syria, however, they have never ceased to inhabit their former haunts. It is true that in 1809 the Nosayriyeh, who have always hated them although they have in part adopted their religion, captured Masyad by treachery ; they were soon driven out of it by the Mutesarrif of Hama, yet not without a booty of one million piastres.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the Assassins have sunk into almost complete oblivion. They are few, they are poor, they are disliked by the Government ; and the Qaimaqam of Masyad, a Syrian, explained to us his views about them on the afternoon of our arrival.

"When first I came to Masyad," he related, "I summoned their Sheikhs. I said to them : 'The Moslems have mosques, and a muezzin to call them to prayers, the Christians have churches and bells. But what have ye for a place of worship ?' And they could not answer me. So I said : 'It is a bad thing for men to hide their religion, and ye cannot be good people.' And as they still answered nothing, I had them arrested ; and the Mutesarrif has granted my request that they should be sent away."

It did not require the Qaimaqam's deprecating smile, when he said "as they still answered nothing," to make quite clear that the answer he had expected was the oiling

<sup>1</sup> Von Hammer, *Geschichte der Assassinen*, Stuttgart, 1818.

of his palm. The Assassins have not forgotten their origin ; poor as they are, they yearly send one-fifth of their scanty revenues to the Aga Khân<sup>1</sup> in India, the head of all the Isma'ilîyeh. Such waste of good material must be truly galling to the underpaid Turkish official, and one quite understands his objection to a tribute which, as he maintains with simple casuistry, argues disloyalty to the Sultan. So the position of the Assassins in these days is not an enviable one. Their appearance, certainly, was cowed and wretched, although this may have been due to the rain, which never ceased while we were at Masyad ; and their houses were mean and crumbling. But the walls of Masyad, albeit thin, are intact ; and the great castle on the eastern side is still inhabited by four or five families. It contains some Byzantine capitals, also some Kufic inscriptions ; and here the attractions of this ancient fortress end.

We now left the Nosayrîyeh Mountains, and, turning eastward along their outlying spurs, dropped gently into the plain. Everything was green from the recent rains ; and where the soil of the plain covered the last rocks of the hills was spread a rich feast of wild flowers, cyclamen, tulips, anemones, and black arums. One night we spent at the village of Rabo, a cold, wet, uncomfortable night ; and for one more day we rode across the plain. At the end of that day the Orontes announced that we had reached our destination, and we pitched our tents by a burial ground outside the town of Hama.

<sup>1</sup> The Aga Khân is the descendant of the Imâm Isma'il. His family dwelt in Persia until 1838, when his grandfather, the Aga Khân Mahallâti, having risen unsuccessfully against Fath 'Alî Shah's Grand Vizier, was compelled to take refuge in India.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE NORTH ROAD. II.

You see nothing of Hama until you are close upon it, for the reason that it is concealed in a declivity made by the beds of the Orontes, the new and the old. Part of the town lies along the former, part in the latter ; and the whole completely encircles, as with a moat, the *tell* which rises in the middle.

The usual Arabic name for the river Orontes is Al-'Urunt. In Hama, however, and its neighbourhood it is called El-'Asi, the Rebel ; and three reasons are given why this invidious designation has been bestowed upon it. The first is that, unlike most rivers of Syria, it flows from the south to the north ; the second, that in so doing, it abandoned the lands of Islam for those of Antioch, in the old time the country of the Infidels, the Greeks ; the third, that it refuses to do as other rivers and freely water the meadows on its borders, but insists on being raised by water-wheels before it will consent to irrigate the fields.

If the latter is the true cause, then Hama owes much to its river's rebelliousness. For the water-wheels, the *na'uras*, are to Hama what her canals are to Venice, or its towers to San Gimignano ; and to few places is it given to possess so charming a distinguishing feature.

HAMA





By day and by night the town is pervaded by the presence of the *na'ura*. All along the curving river side you see these high, narrow, graceful wheels, which attain, sometimes, a diameter of as much as sixty feet, slowly lifting the river water in their buckets and pouring it into lofty aqueducts ; and where you cannot see them, you hear the beautiful noises which they make as they revolve. From the bridge by the *serai* no less than five are visible ; and when, after dark, the citizens have returned to their houses and are preparing for sleep, they are lulled, in whatever part of Hama they may be, by the lovely discords of their drone. Each *na'ura* has its name : there is the Hamidiyeh, the Derwishiyyeh, the Jisriyeh, and so forth ; and each, as it creaks lazily on its axis, sings its own particular song. Their music is mournful and deep, deep as the organ tones of a 64-foot pipe, mournful as the wailing of the double-bass ; and although they blend wonderfully well, the ear can pick out, after a little practice, the different parts of the great choir's everlasting chant. This is the tune of the Jisriyeh wheel, the one by the *serai* bridge :

*lento.*

and this the reiterated groan of another, easily distinguishable in the general *mélée* of sound by its persistent and plaintive melody :

*lento.*

Now booming, now moaning, now pleading, now despondent, as though they know well that theirs is the

labour of Sisyphus, the *na'uras* accomplish their never-ending circuits, delightful to eye and ear. Long after I had left Hama, there came back to me at times, while at others I undoubtedly missed, their curiously haunting, curiously soothing, curiously sad refrain, imprisoned beneath no other roof than 'that inverted Bowl we call the Sky,' and marred by none of the imperfections which the best of human performers are not always able to avoid.

But Hama, even without its *na'uras*, would be an attractive town. While Homs is built of unrelieved black, Hama goes one better ; black and white are its colours, basalt and limestone its materials. Either they lie in alternate layers, as in Siena and Orvieto, or else the black picks out patterns on the white, like no other place that I have seen. Not only dwelling-houses, but square towers and round minarets, of which there are in plenty, do honour to the treatment, which is seen at its best, perhaps, in the Great Mosque. Golden limestone and dull volcanic black, alternating effectively in the paving of the court and in the tower, throw into greater relief the dazzling whitewash of the mosque itself and the age-worn grey of the beautiful *qubbet* outside it. In the mosque and its accessories are many traces of their Byzantine origin. The large wooden *minbar*, or pulpit, is supported on Byzantine columns ; other columns and capitals are embedded in the walls ; others stand at random by the fountain of the court ; on the most delicate of all is borne the *qubbet*. With a foreground such as the court affords, and the five-domed mosque in the background, you have as pretty a sight as you could wish to see. But if you care to cross the Orontes to the Derwîshîyeh quarter, the quarter of the dervishes, you

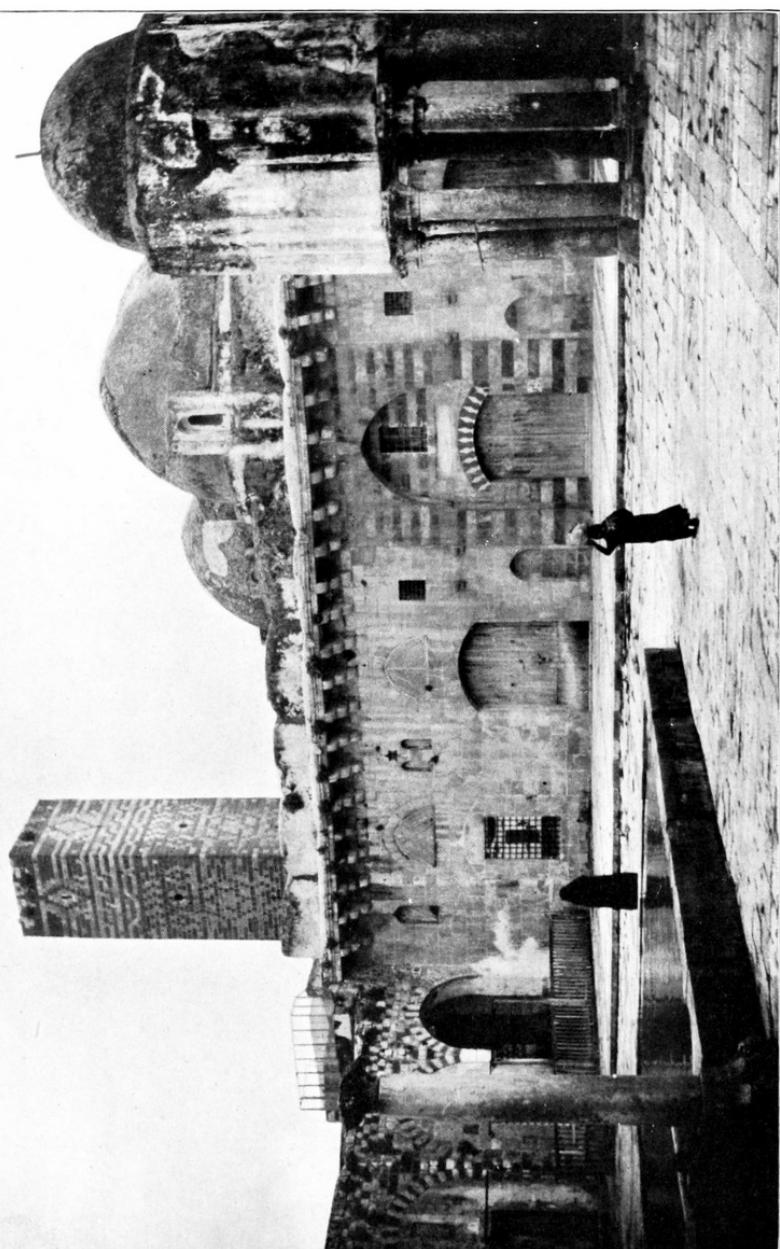
may see yet a prettier one. On a slight eminence above the right bank of the river, facing the *tell* now bare of all traces of its castle, is a plain little mosque, unadorned within save by a stone dado round three sides of the wall, engraved with texts from the *Qoran*. The fourth side is latticed and open to the river ; and in the middle, dividing the lattice, is the pillar which gives to the place its name of the Serpent Mosque. This pillar is composed of four smaller pillars, each of which, again, is subdivided into four double strands, intertwined and interlacing, and more bewildering in their spirals than the snakes of Medusa's head. In the courtyard, by the small and crumbling minaret, is the tomb of the geographer-prince, 'Abu'l Fidâ, who reigned in Hama, as El-Melek el-Muayyad, from 1310 to 1331, and gave to his city, before it relapsed into a placid provincialism from which it has never issued since, one last epoch of distinction. And below, the Orontes flows swiftly by, growing wider as it approaches the centre of the town ; but crossed on the left, where it is still narrow, by a quaint old bridge crowded with tumbling little booths and houses, for all the world like the Ponte Vecchio of an oriental Florence.

Having alluded to a dervish quarter, and to a dervish's costume, I feel that I may well be asked to give some definition of what a dervish is. To begin with, the term is used in more than one connexion ; and it is desirable to remember that it has not everywhere the same significance. We know the dervish as the 'fuzzy-wuzzy' of the Sudan ; we know him also as the follower of the Mollah unjustly designated Mad. Again, to those acquainted with the immortal Hajji Baba, he is the plausible vagabond, cynical and lazy, who lives by

imposing on the credulity of the foolish. But the dervish in his usual guise, that is to say, as a member of one of the religious confraternities of Islam, is neither a fanatically inspired warrior nor a sturdy beggar. The dervishes represent the element in Mohammedanism, by no means negligible, which seeks a wider sphere for its emotions than that generally afforded within the confines of rigid orthodoxy. An intellectual mysticism describes the religious attitude of the more speculative among them, a wide tolerance their attitude towards people and life in general. They are, however, best known, at all events to foreigners, on account of certain spiritual exercises whereby they produce a condition of ecstasy designed to withdraw their minds from earthly things and bring them into closer communion with the Divine. In the Mevlevi sect, whirling, in the Rufai and Naqshibendi, the prolonged repetition of a religious formula, is the means employed for the purpose; and the popularity of these Orders, vulgarly known to Europeans as Dancing and Howling Dervishes, is widespread among the people. Their lay brethren are found in almost every walk of life; and in a small town I know of, a khoja, a qavass, a muezzin, a coppersmith, and a butcher regularly participate, among others, in their *séances*. I confess that I have avoided their ceremonies in Constantinople and other great cities, where they are said to degenerate into shows provided for the curious; but I have witnessed them in smaller towns, where their solemnity as acts of devotion is convincing and impressive.

A *tekyé* of Mevlevi dervishes generally contains a mosque for the performance of the ordinary *namaz* (the five daily prayers obligatory on all Moslems), and a

THE GREAT MOSQUE, HAMA





*sema-khané*, or dancing room, where the ritual peculiar to the Order is performed. At one end of the *sema-khané* is a minstrels' gallery ; and somewhere about the premises will probably be found, painted on glass, the representation of a large dervish cap bound with a green turban, and a conventionalized picture of the tomb of the founder of the Order. This was the Sheikh Jelalu'd-Dîn, often called Mevlana, 'Our Lord,' who instituted the sect in the thirteenth century at Konia in Asia Minor, and embodied his teaching in a mystical poem known as the Mesnevi. The headquarters of the Order are still at Konia, and to the founder's hereditary successors, who bear the title of Chelebi of Konia, falls the honour of girding each Sultan of Turkey, on his accession, with the historic sword of 'Osman. At the opening of the ceremony of dancing the dervishes are seated in a semi-circle on the floor, their Sheikh in the middle. Somebody up in the minstrels' gallery commences to intone passages from the Mesnevi in the original Persian ; and presently the Sheikh gives the signal for dancing to begin. Two or three musicians in the gallery play plaintive melodies on reed pipes, another accompanies on a tomtom. The dervishes rise and defile past the Sheikh in order of seniority, kissing the hem of his sleeve in passing. They wear the high dervish cap of camel hair, a zouave jacket, and a long skirt pleated like that of a ballerina ; their feet are bare. Once more they gravely perambulate the room ; and each dervish, as he goes by the Sheikh, turns and bows to the man behind him. Then, with arms extended, for balance, and with the right palm turned up, the left turned down, they proceed very slowly to rotate as far as possible on the same spot. The pleats of their skirts

open with the motion, and the room seems to be filled with revolving peg-tops. As the exercise continues, the look of abstraction on the faces of the performers becomes more and more marked; while to the imaginative onlooker, affected by the weird, unearthly music, the singular and mysterious spectacle seems as a vision from another world. From time to time, to prevent exhaustion, there is a brief interval, at the end of which the Sheikh bows to the musicians' gallery and gives the signal to resume. Should the occasion be one of sufficient importance for the Sheikh himself to take part, the musicians strike up a tune only played when he dances. With grave dignity he comes forward into the middle of the floor, and becomes, as it were, the pivot around which the others gyrate.

When all is over, attendants hasten to throw cloaks over the dancers, who by this time are bathed in perspiration. For a few moments they still appear as in a trance, then slowly come back to earth. Again they defile past the Sheikh and kiss his hand, which he raises to his lips; and, in returning to their places for the prayers whereby the service is concluded, embrace one another in token of the brotherhood which unites them within the Order.

When journeying in Turkey by caravan, it is necessary, from time to time, to give camp servants, grooms, and mukâris a day of thorough rest; and it is desirable, at rarer intervals, to fortify them against fatigues to come by judicious presents of sheep. This practice should be avoided, however, if on the following day it is proposed to travel; as the orgy which a gift of this kind entails is apt to produce, for at least twenty-four hours after, a condition not far removed from coma. But as we were

'sitting down' in Hama for three days, the opportunity, we were reminded, was too good to be lost; and a couple of sheep with monstrous fat tails, the usual Syrian breed, were duly produced to an expectant but none the less thankful retinue. I may mention, parenthetically, that the fat of the tail, insurmountably nauseous to the majority of strangers, is to the people of these regions both a delicacy and a necessary of life, the common medium of cookery, and a substitute for butter, suet, and oil. The ingratiating Georgie having been deputed to borrow the biggest copper cauldron to be found in Hama, and returning successful, he and his companions, after garnishing the animals with rice and *leben*, and lubricating them with the fat of the tails, proceeded to boil them therein whole, and then invited us to watch them eat. This, although hardly a pretty sight, was one full of interest, as showing how widely the digestions of Syrians must differ from those of Europeans: silent and intent, they sat round the cauldron, tearing pieces of meat from the bone, mixing them with rice and *leben*, consolidating them by means of the fat into balls or dumplings of terrifying size, and then, apparently, gulping them down whole. Had their necks been longer, one would have seen an effect similar to that produced by an ostrich swallowing oranges. As, under these circumstances, mastication is reduced to a minimum, it follows that the flavour of the bolus is a very secondary consideration; and, in point of fact, they derive their principal enjoyment, not from the taste of the dish, but from feeling their distended stomachs press against the surrounding organs. Nor do they love to linger over their food. The instant the last pill has been inserted, they get up abruptly, leave

the scene of the banquet for the shade of some neighbouring tree, and straightway plunge into slumber which can only be described as hoggish.

When our men had thoroughly recovered, we set forth once more, now bound for the city of Haleb, better known in the West by its pretty Italian name Aleppo, a name which recalls the bygone era when Genoese and Venetian commerce held first place in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean, the spacious days of Bassaws and Levant Companies, of Beglerbegs and the Grand Signor. From Hama to Aleppo there are two ways: one, going almost due north, which roughly follows, though it never meets, the line of the railway; and the other, longer and more interesting, which breaks off to the west, and, in passing Mudik and El-Bara, traverses the curious district of the *Jebel ez-Zâwiyyeh*, where the traveller from the south meets for the first time the well-preserved remains of an interesting and obscure period. In this period, from the fourth to the eighth century A.D., the domains of the former Seleucid kingdom of Antioch were sown with ecclesiastical and domestic buildings, executed in the hard, grey stone of the country by architects who blended with the traditions of their not yet forgotten classical art the new symbolism of Christianity. Later on, we were to meet many examples of the activity of this age, but for the time being deemed it better to choose the shorter route, itself by no means lacking in interest, although for three days it led us across the flattest regions of the great plain. For the absence of natural features was counterbalanced by subterranean excavations so numerous that the ground continually gave out hollow sounds as we rode over it. The loamy, highly cultivated surface

seemed to be no more than a crust covering an endless succession of underground chambers; and we thought at times, so resonant was the clang of the horses' hoofs against it, that it would prove all too thin for its burden. There were tombs, there were cisterns whose apertures had very carefully to be avoided, and, most numerous of all, there were corn-holes, that is to say, bell-shaped, underground granaries, in which the villagers are wont to store their grain. Their small, round mouths, slightly raised above the level of the plain so as to throw off the rain water, are veritable traps for the unwary. And the habitations of the people here assume an unaccustomed form. Instead of the flat-roofed houses of stone, their clusters separated by narrow, winding streets, one is surprised to find kraals of conical mud-huts, tapering to a point, and standing apart from one another, even when two or three are enclosed within a single compound.

In one of these villages, Et-Tayyibeh, we took refuge, an hour after riding out of Hama, from a downpour of rain, heavy as only Scotland and Syria can produce; and, huddling round a fire which was promptly kindled in the guest-house, awaited the abatement of the storm. Although the village was utterly poor—a condition due, possibly, to the tax-farmer or to the thievish Nosayriyeh, certainly not to the soil—its inhabitants did not forget that they were Arabs and our hosts; and were making to kill a sheep, no commonplace, I am sure, but one, very likely, which had been kept carefully against some high feast-day, when we became aware of their intentions and averted the sacrifice, without, I trust, wounding their feelings. Undoubtedly, it is as hosts that the Arabs are seen at

their best: few peoples have so high and so disinterested a conception of the obligations of hospitality, few will make the same sacrifices to carry them out. It is, therefore, the more surprising that they should combine with this quality others which one would suppose it would necessarily exclude. In every village of the Hauran, for example, the traveller is entertained for three and a half days, during which he is lodged and fed at the expense of the community, without being required to make any return; yet these very people frequently show themselves to be cruel, revengeful, greedy, treacherous, and breakers of their word. On the one hand the maxim *noblesse oblige* is followed as it rarely is elsewhere; on the other, its relevance is entirely ignored. Perhaps the same anomaly would be found in the West to-day, had not a spirit arising from the Crusading era, a spirit manifested in the respect paid to women and in the growth of the Orders of Knighthood, imposed on public opinion, with a force which could not be gainsaid, the two conceptions, Chivalry and Honour; perhaps the coexistence in the Asiatic of such diverse traits is one of the fundamental points of difference between him and the European. Whichever is the case, one should give credit for the good, and discount the bad; and it was certainly difficult to see anything but good in the pathetic attempt of the poor people of Et-Tayyibeh to follow precepts which were dictated by no expectation of advantage to themselves.

In lieu of the respited sheep, our hosts set bowls of milk before us, while one of the younger men pounded coffee in a wooden mortar. The Arabs drink their coffee unsweetened and mixed with cardamom; and to

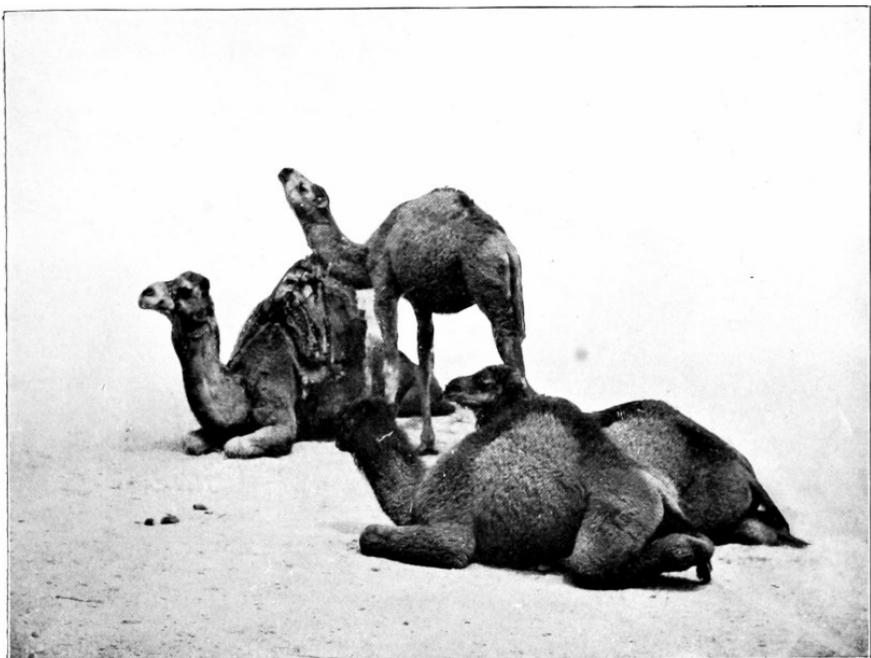
those accustomed to the highly sweetened coffee of the towns it has a bitter taste until they have learnt to appreciate its exquisite aroma. And as the tribes of certain parts of West Africa may be recognized by the beat of their drums as they paddle their canoes down the great rivers or along the myriad creeks which intersect the steamy mangrove swamps, so may each Beduin clan be distinguished by the particular rhythm with which, in pounding the coffee, the pestle is knocked against the sides of the mortar.

Presently the heavens smiled again, and we passed on, thankful to the rain for having thrown us among these nice people; and soon we came to Murik, another beehive village, lying between two of the *tulul*<sup>1</sup> which here alone break the monotony of the view. As we approached, we observed that an important ceremony was in progress. The villagers were welcoming back one of their number who had returned (many do not) from the pilgrimage to Mecca, and we overtook the procession just as it was nearing the outskirts of the village. The *haji* was surrounded by his fellow-towns-men, who had ridden forth a considerable distance to meet him, and were making of his entry into his humble native place a veritable Roman *triumphus*. The men galloped ahead, racing us for a furlong or so from sheer light-heartedness, then turned back and galloped forward again; while the children appeared to be tumbling about under the very feet of the pilgrim's steed. There was much laughter, much shouting, and much singing of those weird Arab melodies which seem to have no beginning and no end. And a proud man was he that day whose house was first reached by the

<sup>1</sup> Plural of *tell*.

*haji*; his was the privilege, which many would covet, of killing a sheep, and of setting it before the traveller who had safely accomplished, to his own renown and to the edification of his friends, the duty of every good Moslem.

We camped at Khân Sheikhûn, yet another beehive village at the foot of another flat-topped *tell*; and at noon of the following day reached Ma'aret en-No'mân, where two fine, but now, alas, ruinous *khâns* recall that Midhat of the sixteenth century, Sinân Pasha, whose end indicates that the energetic and reforming Governor in the days of Sultan Murad III. was regarded with much the same feelings as in those of his nineteenth century successors. But Ma'aret en-No'mân has memories more tragic than this. In the penultimate year of the eleventh century it was invested by the Crusaders, who were advancing southward after the capture of Antioch. For a long time Marra, as it was then called by the Christians, held out; and as the people of the country had led all their cattle off to the mountains, in anticipation of the enemy's arrival, the besiegers were driven to great straits for want of food. One graphic writer says that "some roasted boys whole on spits, or boiled them like chickens," while Foucher of Chartres attributes to them in their need the perpetration of even greater horrors. Meanwhile the besieged poured Greek Fire on them from the castle, this being, it is said, the first occasion on which the Moslems used it against the Crusaders. But the arrival of Bohemond, the newly-made Prince of Antioch, stimulated the latter to make a desperate effort: after a great assault the place was carried at last and the defenders put to the sword; and shortly afterwards, to remove the dissensions which



CAMELS RESTING



CHURCH, RUWEIHA



had arisen as to its possession, the town was levelled to the ground.

On leaving Marra, we made a slight détour, and turned off the road to the west, to where the fourth century town of Ruweiha proves in no uncertain manner the enterprise, the wealth, the security, the piety, and the culture of the Jebel ez-Zâwiyyeh in the centuries immediately preceding the conquest of Syria by 'Omar and his Arab hordes. No city this, like Ba'albek and Palmyra, of proud palaces and resplendent temples, whose purpose would not infrequently seem to have been the glorification of the worshippers rather than of the worshipped; but a quiet little country town whose affluence is shown by its substantial dwelling-houses of stone, whose security by the absence of defences of any kind, whose piety and culture by its simple but admirable church, standing some three-quarters of a mile away from the town itself. Ruweiha gives in its excellent preservation a striking object lesson of the age and of the people. It was not an era of great monuments, its people performed no brilliant exploits which carried their fame into other lands. The Jebel ez-Zâwiyyeh held a self-contained little community, peaceful, prosperous, contented, a community of yeoman farmers who derived a good competence from their fields, their cattle, and their vines, and who, satisfied with the bounteous gifts of their soil, did not seek to supplement them by the harassing pursuit of commerce in the big cities by the sea. They were good Christians, as is shown by the number of their monasteries and churches; and seem to have been a sound, hardworking, and well-balanced people, who preferred solid comfort to lavish display,

but knew how to give to their religious and public buildings a befitting measure of dignity. Now their towns stand deserted, although in many cases still fit for habitation; while beside their houses wretched Beduin of the poorest class, harried by their stronger fellow-tribesmen on the one side, on the other by the Nosayrîyeh, eke out in their black camel-hair tents a miserable existence from the land which provided one so comfortable for their industrious predecessors. As we passed out of Ruweiha to rejoin the road once more, they emerged from their tents, and offered us, true to their traditions, their humble hospitality. One could not but pity these squalid and oppressed children of Ishmael; and when one compared their dwellings with those whose occupants had flourished some fifteen centuries before, one realized that the dark ages in the Jebel ez-Zâwiyyeh were not contemporaneous with the dark ages in Europe. Yet,

ad ogni uccello  
suo nido è bello;

and their tents, miserable though they may be, doubtless appear to them more attractive abodes by far than would the most substantial of stone mansions.

That night we slept at Khân es-Sebil, the *khân* itself possessing a Mameluke gate with stone door and hinges; and on the next, having passed many beehive villages, at Zirbe. Early on the following morning we perceived the hill upon which Aleppo's citadel is built, the hill round which the city lies. The country was very bare, and in the distance the hill rose above the roofs of Aleppo as bare and naked as its surroundings. After a further interval of dreary plain, we crossed

the flooded and swiftly rushing Kuweik, and, skirting what is left of town wall and bastions, entered at last the city where Abraham, the Friend of God, departing out of Haran, sat down and milked his cow.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### FROM ALEPO TO THE EUPHRATES.

I do not know if the tale that Abraham milked his cow in the citadel of Aleppo rests on any surer foundation than the similarity of the name *Haleb* with the Arabic verb meaning ‘to milk.’ There is, however, no doubt that Aleppo was a very ancient city when Seleucus Nicator rebuilt it as *Beroea*; and it was then and during many subsequent centuries a place of much commercial importance as the emporium where the goods of Persia and India were sold to the merchants of the West. The discovery of the Cape route to India, and, later, the cutting of the Suez Canal, reduced very considerably the overland trade to Aleppo; but even now its *khâns* are the most spacious in Syria, its bazaars not without importance. The nucleus of Aleppo is the citadel which crowns the stone-faced *tell* in its midst, the citadel whose entrance is even in its decay a thing of great beauty; vestiges of all periods of its history are contained within its walls. The little Mosque of Abraham on the plateau inside the fort preserves associations with that Patriarch; Hittite lions and the Kufic inscriptions of Melek ed-Daher, the son of Saladin, in the vestibule bridge a period of two thousand years and more; in the casemates lies rusting the ammunition which Ibrâhim

Pasha the Egyptian left behind him in 1840. And the interlacing serpents, apparently devouring one another over the arch of the entrance into the castle, might well be symbolical of the immortality which Aleppo seems likely to achieve. From a tower on the highest part of the citadel you obtain an all-embracing view of the city and its surroundings, of minarets and towers, of stone-roofed bazaars and the domes of Turkish baths, of the white suburbs inhabited by thousands of Levantines and Jews. In the hands of these people rests much of the commerce of the place; and on Sundays and holidays the Pont Neuf is crowded with the carriages of Levantine ladies, who, attired in silks of every hue and thickly powdered, drive to the countless arbours outside the town to consume sherbet and cigarettes and to listen with delight to the raucous wheezings of cheap gramophones. The quantity of powder lavished on complexions naturally pallid was the cause of some surprise, until one had seen on the countenances of those less vain the ravages wrought by the 'Aleppo boil' or 'button.' This affliction spares few who have resided for any length of time in Aleppo, and with irritating perversity attacks for preference those parts of the body which are exposed to view, especially face and hands. The form of the ailment is a pimple which remains for a year and then disappears, leaving in its place a permanent mark or scar. Its cause is disputed, and no cure appears yet to have been discovered; but as a prophylactic the following procedure, *pace* F. Walpole,<sup>1</sup> seems to have been in vogue two generations ago:

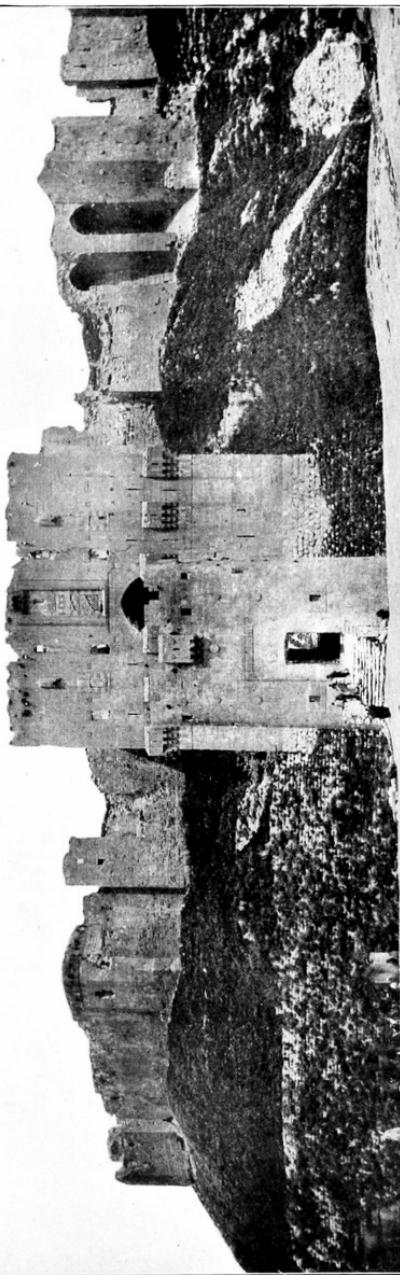
"A fat child was brought with an atrocious-looking button, and my arm received in various punctures the

<sup>1</sup> *The Ansayrii, with Travels in the Further East*, London, 1851.

matter. It was as well to avoid a nasty sore if it could be done at so cheap a rate ; and though the vaccination never took, yet, as I also escaped the button, there was no great harm done."

Aleppo is the capital of a vilayet of the same name which extends from the coast across the Euphrates, very nearly to the banks of the upper Tigris. The Vali Pasha who at the time of our visit ruled over this wide territory was an elderly and affable gentleman, bearded and corpulent, an Old Turk *de la vieille roche*, who in the privacy of his own house preferred oriental costume to the constraining garments of Europe, and sat cross-legged on the divan instead of enduring, like his more modern colleagues, discomfort on a chair. He was also by virtue of his dignity, in the official language of Turkey, a basis of the order of the world, who with penetrating thought directed affairs of the nation, and with sound prescience concluded the grave concerns of mankind, a consolidator of the structure of the State and of prosperity, a support of the pillars of happiness and grandeur, possessed of a right in the various rewards of the Most High, and particularly adopted by the bountiful favour of God the Sovereign Lord. Above all, he was kindness personified, gave us access to the citadel, and sent his aide-de-camp to conduct us over the Mosque of Zacharias. This is the principal mosque of Aleppo, and at this time Christians were very rarely admitted. The mosque is flanked by a large court containing two handsome fountains, and is itself a long, low, flat-roofed building divided by a wooden screen into two unequal parts. The smaller section is used for daily prayer ; the larger contains, under a green velvet pall heavily embroidered, and in an enclosure lined with

THE CITADEL OF ALEPPO





green and blue tiles, the tomb of Zacharias, father of the Baptist. The Halewîyeh Mosque, close by, possesses cornice and capitals of the same architectural period as the buildings of the Jebel ez-Zâwîyeh ; the Mosque of Sultan At-Trush, opposite the citadel, is one of the most attractive examples in Aleppo of Saracenic art. Aleppo contains few great monuments, but the houses of the inhabitants are well and solidly built, and testify to the city's prosperity. Doubtless, in the seventeenth century its prosperity was greater. In those days it was the headquarters of the English Levant Company, and close on fifty English merchants were able to thrive despite the competition of French, Dutch, and Venetians. We read much in contemporary accounts of the luxury then prevailing in Aleppo, of marble courts and plashing fountains concealed by windowless outer walls, of wainscoted rooms and gilded ceilings, traces of which may still, indeed, be seen. And so great was the opulence of the native Christians and Jews, that their houses were provided with vaults for the custody of treasure in times of danger, and with underground passages, whereby secret communication could be maintained throughout their respective quarters. Of the prosperity of the English merchants we may judge from the fact that at Easter, 1697, fourteen made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem ; upon which occasion Henry Maundrell, chaplain to the Factory and cicerone to the party, wrote his well-known description of *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*, quoted in a previous chapter. From another clerical source we derive much amusing information concerning the life and doings of the English colony. Henry Teonge, a chaplain in the Royal Navy, paid a visit to Aleppo in 1676, riding up from

Alexandretta with the officers of the small English fleet which had put into that port. According to his *Diary* (published in 1825) the members of the little community must have led a very agreeable existence. Sport, in the shape of ‘duck-hunting, fishing, and shooting,’ was plentiful ; at other times they diverted themselves with ‘hand-ball, krickett, scrofilo.’ They entertained lavishly and often ; and the reverend gentleman, who, like the true Cavalier that he was, thoroughly appreciated good cheer, waxes eloquent over descriptions of the banquets at which he was regaled. Foremost among many entertainments in honour of the fleet was “a treat of our Consull’s providinge ; but such a on as I never saw before. The particulars whereof you may see below ; the dishes being all placed as they stood on the table.”

On a cold and rainy morning we departed from Aleppo, bound for the Euphrates and beyond. On our left, as we rode out of the town, rose the stately dervish *tekyé* of Sheikh’u Bekr, which rejoices, I believe, in the biggest cypress tree of the neighbourhood ; on our right was the Moslem burial ground, where lie the remains of the celebrated General Bem. This man, a Pole by birth, quitted his country after the Polish rising in the thirties, and with a number of his compatriots took refuge in Hungary, to avoid the severities of Russian reprisals. Every family of the Hungarian aristocracy had pledged itself to give asylum to one Polish guest ; and, in return, many Polish refugees, including Bem, took service in the Hungarian army. In 1848, when Hungary rose against Austria, Bem was given the command of a division in Transylvania, where

A DISH OF TURKEYS	A DISH OF TARTS								
A PLATE OF SAUCEAGES									
A DISH OF GELLYS	A DISH OF GAMMONS AND TONGS								
A BISQUÉ OF EGGS									
A DISH OF GEESE	A DISH OF BISCOTTS								
A PLATE OF ANCHOVIES									
A DISH OF HENS	A VENISON PASTY								
A PLATE OF ANCHOVIES									
A DISH OF BISCOTTS	A DISH OF GREEN GEESE								
A GREAT DISH WITH A PYRAMID OF MARCHPANE									
A DISH OF TARTS	A DISH OF HENS								
A DISH OF HARTICHOCKS									
A PASTY	A DISH OF MARCHPANE IN CAKES								
A DISH OF SAUCEAGES									
A DISH OF GAMMONS	A DISH OF BISCOTT								
A PLATE OF HERRINGS									
A DISH OF GEESE	A DISH OF TURKEYS								
A PLATE OF ANCHOVIES									
A DISH OF MARCHPANE	A PASTY								
HARTICHOCKS									
A DISH OF HENS	A DISH OF GELLYS								
A PYRAMID OF MARCHPANE									
A DISH OF BISCOTT	A DISH OF GAMMONS								
*	*	*	*	ANCHOVIES	*	*	*	*	*

he was able to keep the Austrians and their allies, the Russians, at bay. In 1849, however, he took the offensive ; and, being a poor general although a dashing fighter, was beaten at Temesvar. Thereupon he fled to Turkey, became a Mohammedan, and, having taken the name of Murad, died as a Turkish Pasha in Aleppo. About ninety Hungarians followed Bem to Aleppo, and also embraced Islam.

It is, of course, most unusual for bodies of Christians to leave a Christian country and settle, as Moslems, in a Moslem land. It frequently happens, however, that Mohammedan natives of countries which have passed from Mohammedan into non-Mohammedan control leave their homes and seek grants of land in the Turkish Empire, so that they may continue to live under a Mohammedan ruler. In many parts of Syria and Asia Minor are colonies of Algerians, Cretan Moslems, and Circassians who voluntarily left their countries when they ceased to be governed by Mohammedans. At Bâb, for example, where we camped on the first night after leaving Aleppo, we found a number of Circassians ; and Manbij, the ancient Bambyke and Hierapolis, where we camped on the following day, is almost wholly a Circassian town. Although one does not hear much, as a rule, to the credit of government in Turkey, one must concede, in the face of such facts, that in the opinion of some people who are not Turks there are worse alternatives than Turkish rule. Evidently there are men who prefer Turkish government to Russian, or to the sway of a Greek majority in Crete. Circassians in Russia and Algerians under the French are probably more strictly supervised, more closely controlled, than they are in Turkey ; but I do not think that they come

to Turkey because opportunities for villainy are greater, nor have I heard that the immigrant colonists conduct themselves worse than their neighbours. No one will deny that the Circassians in Turkey, despite their inclination to sheep-stealing, compare favourably with the followers of the Kurdish chief, Ibrâhîm Pasha, who until recently terrorized this and adjacent districts. It would be interesting to test, if it were possible, the strength of Mohammedanism as a bond between different peoples. In some respects, but not in all, it is unquestionably a stronger bond than Christianity. The late Mr. Meredith Townsend remarked in his enlightening book *Asia and Europe*, when comparing the progress of Islam and Christianity in India, that the Mahomedan missionary possesses "a fury of ardour which induces him to break down every obstacle, his own strongest prejudices included, rather than stand for an instant in a neophyte's way. He welcomes him as a son, and whatever his own lineage, and whether the convert be Negro or Chinaman or Indian or even European, he will without hesitation or scruple give him his own child in marriage, and admit him fully, frankly, and finally into the most exclusive circle in the world." He observed further that the Christian missionary "who dies a martyr to his efforts to convert the Indians would die unhappy if his daughter married the best convert among them." In some respects the bond of Islam astonishes by its strength, in others by its weakness. It is strong enough to attract Cretan and Circassian Moslems from their countries to Turkey; but not strong enough to take the place in that Empire of a national patriotism, the existence of which racial diversity has hitherto made impossible. The Turkish Empire does not rest upon

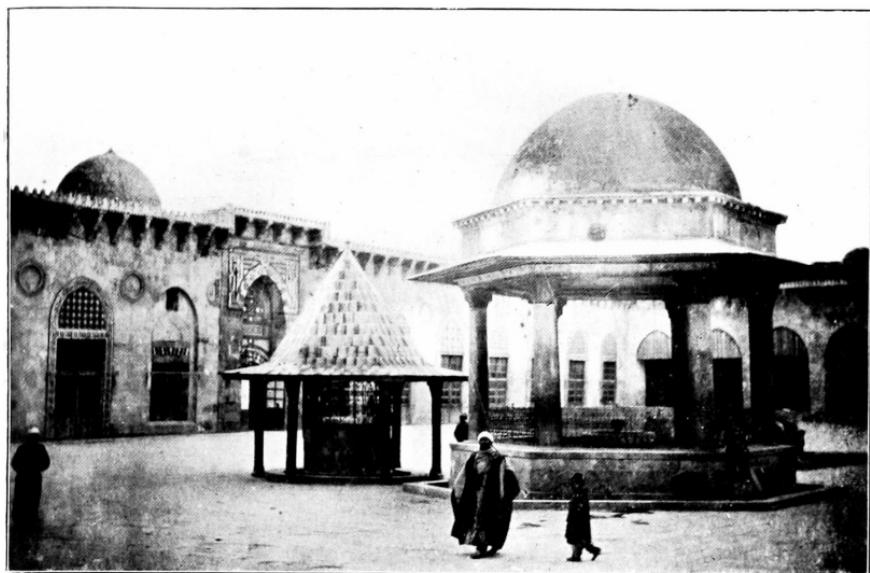
unity of aspirations and mutual consent, but upon the fact that the Turks are the ruling race ; and it is here that the bond of Mohammedanism breaks down. It is unable to inspire with enthusiasm for the Empire the non-Ottoman Moslem inhabitants of Kurdistan, or to prevent the natives of the Yemen from being almost constantly in a state of revolt. The Turks have found it almost as difficult to deal with the Kurds in Asia as they have with the Albanians in Europe. Although in the course of their history the Kurds have produced some great men, Saladin among them, they are a cruel, unsettled, and apparently untameable people. They disregard the Turks, harry the Armenians, and plunder the poor little communities of Jacobites and Nestorians which are sparsely scattered over the vaguely defined region known as Kurdistan. The Turkish Government's expedient to preserve a semblance of authority over the nomadic Kurdish tribes has been to give official recognition to their fighting men as regiments of irregular light cavalry, under the name of Hamidiyeh regiments ; and to provide them with arms and ammunition. It could really do little else unless it was prepared to treble the strength of its garrisons ; and to a certain extent intertribal warfare has weakened the power of the Kurds for mischief. The expedient was disastrous, however, in the case of Ibrâhîm Pasha, the chief of the Melli Kurds alluded to above. Happily, this man's career of brigandage and murder has now closed ; but at the time of our journey he was still the terror of the inhabitants of the vilayets of Aleppo and Diarbekr and of the mutesarrifliq of Zor. At his capital of Vairanshehir, the Roman Antoninopolis, which lies between Urfa and Diarbekr, he commanded an army

largely composed of refugees from justice and of the worst scoundrels of Northern Mesopotamia ; and travellers wishing to cross the region under his control had meekly to seek his permission. Unfortunately, Ibrâhîm and his men, while a blight upon the land, were in good odour in Constantinople ; and in 1905 Ibrâhîm was permitted to come to the capital and to parade his regiment at Yildiz. Posing as the defender of the Ottoman throne in Kurdistan against disloyal Arabs and conspiring Armenians, he was given a magnificent reception ; and he profited by the occasion to secure with rich gifts the friendship of those in authority at headquarters. On his return to Mesopotamia, his oppression of the wretched population increased ; but the heavy bribes which he continued to send to Constantinople diverted attention from the complaints and accusations brought against him by the local officials. It was not until after the revolution that Turkey was rid of this pest.

Four hours of riding across the flat, treeless plateau brought us from Manbij to a low bank below which the great river Euphrates, flooded and swollen, rushed very swiftly by. The river, at this time and point, was about nine hundred yards wide and full of sandbanks ; and the ferry-boat which conveyed us over it a strange, triangular craft terminating at one end in a high poop, at the other end flat-bottomed and open, like a barge, to enable carriages to be taken on board. On this occasion were embarked two carriages of the peculiar Mesopotamian type known as *yailîyeh*, conveyances suggestive of coffins on wheels ; and from them issued throughout the crossing the shrieks of the terrified Turkish ladies their occupants. Nor were their apprehensions baseless ; for horses, donkeys, and an undue number of human

beings filled our crazy craft almost to overflowing. The pilot sat at the poop, to which was attached a long pole, weighted at the end, forming the handle of a second pole that did duty as rudder and propeller. At the other end of the boat two men rowed, also with poles, while a third punted whenever we were in danger of running on to a sandbank. By allowing the current to turn us round and round, by skilfully dodging islands and banks, and with no little luck, we landed in Mesopotamia after an exciting voyage which lasted thirty-five minutes and all but reduced the Turkish ladies in the *yailiyehs* to unconsciousness. The current had carried us nearly two miles down stream, and we disembarked at the Kurdish village of Tell Ahmar that lies at the foot of the Hittite mound from which it takes its name. Three weeks before, Mr. Hogarth had come here, the first western scholar to examine its Hittite and Assyrian remains ; so that only one before us, and he but three weeks earlier, had seen with seeing eyes the stele, the sculptured slabs of basalt, and the lions of Shalmaneser the Second, which lay scattered about the village and the *tell*.

As from the *tell* one surveyed the vast plateau of Mesopotamia, extending from the great river to the north and east and south, utterly bare of trees, nearly devoid of villages, it was difficult to conjure up a vision of the Mesopotamia which we know to have existed, a thickly populated, smiling land, full of splendid cities, and cultivated almost throughout its length and breadth. Not only in the far distant days of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires was Mesopotamia one of the most flourishing regions of the world ; her prosperity extended well into the Christian era, and was



MOSQUE OF ZACHARIAS, ALEPPO



OUR FERRY ACROSS THE EUPHRATES



possibly at its height only thirteen centuries ago, under the Sassanian kings whose towns and palaces have lately been described and illustrated by Miss Gertrude Bell in *Amurath to Amurath*, a sequel to her equally interesting book on Syria, *The Desert and the Sown*. It is remarkable that a country which could support cities so great, and produce monuments so wonderful, should have sunk into its present condition of decay in the relatively short period which has elapsed since its conquest by the Arabs in the middle of the seventh century, A.D. There is no doubt that the soil of El-Jezireh is still rich, and every probability that with irrigation it would again produce heavy crops. But in place of a large population, industrious, civilized, and cultured, Mesopotamia now nourishes at her withered bosom a scanty brood of wanderers and marauders, people who have neither the inclination nor the fitness to undertake the regeneration of their land. Even in the cities which have survived, a diminished population occupies only a portion of the space enclosed by massive but now decaying walls; and in some life and property are barely more secure than in the open desert. Thus, there now attaches to Urfa or Edessa, the principal town of this sanjaq of the vilayet of Aleppo, a sinister reputation in consequence of the Armenian massacres of 1896; but during part of the Crusading epoch Edessa was the flourishing capital of the principality of the same name, the first of the Frankish states in the East; and at a previous period the prosperous seat of that dynasty of tributary kings, most of whom bore the name of Abgar. It was also the first home of Christianity east of the Euphrates, and as such the fountain of several legends which penetrated into Europe and

were handed down in the eastern and western Churches in a variety of guises. The most persistent of these tell of the correspondence between Abgar V., Ukkāmā or 'the Black,' the fifteenth king of Edessa of the dynasty of the Abgars, with our Lord; and of the gift of Christ to Abgar of a cloth upon which He had impressed His features. Abgar V. was an historical personage who is known to have reigned from 13 to 50 A.D. The legend relates that, suffering from an incurable disease, he invited our Lord, of whose miracles he had heard, to visit Edessa and heal him. The principal authority for his letter of invitation and for our Lord's reply is Eusebius of Caesarea, who states, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, that he translated both from the Syriac text which he found among the archives of the reign of Abgar in Edessa. The Armenian historian, Moses of Khorene, gives a similar version of the letters, while a third version, differing somewhat from the two others, is contained in a Syriac manuscript known as *Doctrina Addaei*,<sup>1</sup> which was discovered in the middle of the nineteenth century. The authenticity of the letters is still in dispute, although the balance of opinion inclines to regard them as apocryphal. The text of the letters, according to Eusebius, is as follows :

"Abgarus, Ruler of Edessa, to Jesus, the excellent Saviour who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem, greeting ! I have heard the reports of thee and of thy cures as performed by thee without medicines and herbs. For it is said that thou makest the blind to see and the lame to walk, that thou cleansest lepers and castest out impure spirits and demons, and that thou

<sup>1</sup> Thaddaeus, one of the seventy, and according to the legend the first apostle to Edessa.

healest those afflicted with lingering disease, and raisest the dead. And having heard all these things concerning thee, I have concluded that one of two things must be true: either thou art God and having come down from heaven thou doest these things, or else thou, who doest these things, art the son of God. I have therefore written to thee to ask thee that thou wouldest take the trouble to come to me and heal the disease which I have. For I have heard that the Jews are murmuring against thee and are plotting to injure thee. But I have a very small yet noble city which is great enough for us both."

"Blessed art thou," runs our Lord's reply, sent by the courier Ananias, "who hast believed in me without having seen me. For it is written concerning me, that they who have seen me will not believe in me and that they who have not seen me will believe and be saved. But in regard to what thou hast written me, that I should come to thee, it is necessary for me to fulfil all these things here for which I have been sent, and after I have fulfilled them thus to be taken up again to him who sent me. But after I have been taken up I will send to thee one of my disciples, that he may heal thy disease and give life to thee and thine."

The legend concerning the portrait of Christ is a sequel to that of the letters; and as Eusebius makes no mention of it, it was probably unknown to the archivist of the reign of Abgar. In its earlier form it relates that Abgar's courier returned from Jerusalem to Edessa with a likeness of Christ which he, the courier, had painted. So says Moses of Khorene. Subsequently the picture becomes possessed of miraculous properties, and heals King Abgar of his sickness.

In its next stage it is ‘not wrought by the hand of man’ (*ἀχειροπόιητος*), but is the impression of our Lord’s features on a cloth or towel; and from this form has arisen in the western Church the legend of St. Veronica.<sup>1</sup> It is undisputed that the image was of great antiquity. In 944 it was brought to Constantinople by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetus, and the day of its translation became an important feast in the Orthodox Church; to the image is dedicated the monastery of Acheiropoietos near Lapethos in Cyprus, mentioned on a previous page. At the sack of Constantinople in 1453 the image disappeared, and its possession is now claimed by the Church of St. Bartholomew in Genoa.

It had been our intention to continue eastward to Urfa, and, if possible, to Mardin. Unexpectedly, however, circumstances now arose which made our return to Aleppo imperative. We therefore recrossed the Euphrates a little above Tell Ahmar, and rode northward along its right bank, past cliffs honeycombed with caves which once, perhaps, were inhabited, to where it is entered by the river Sajur. For a few miles we rode beside the Sajur, and then returned by Manbij and Bâb to Aleppo.

<sup>1</sup> Lipsius, *Die Edessenische Abgar-Sage*, Brunswick, 1880.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### PRINCIPALITIES OF THE CRUSADERS.

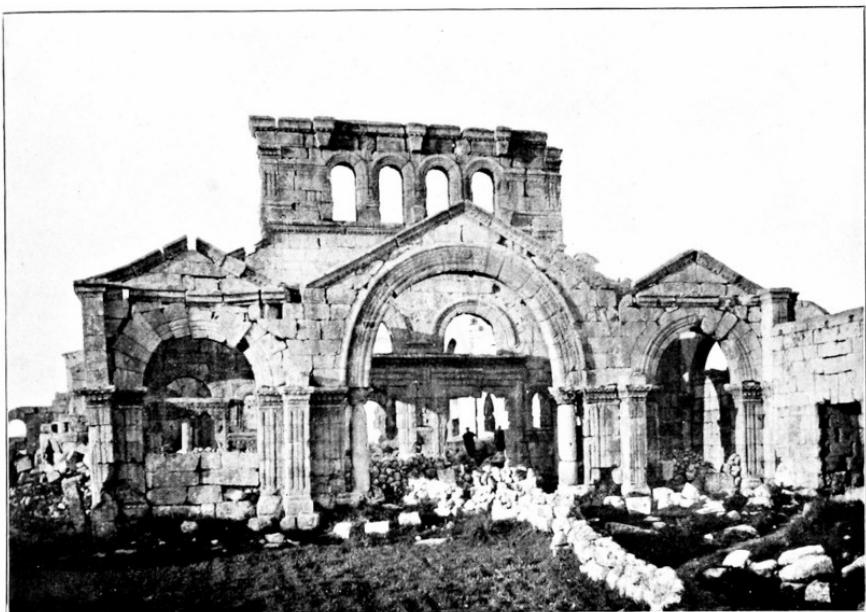
FROM Aleppo westward to Antioch, through a country deeply marked with the impress of the capital of the House of Seleucus; and from Antioch southward through the principalities of the Crusaders—these were the concluding stages of our journey. Guided by an old Turk who remembered the entry into Aleppo of the Egyptian Ibrâhîm Pasha, we rode in a north-westerly direction to the stony hills of the Jebel Sim'ân, a region rich in villages and monuments akin to those of the Jebel ez-Zâwîyeh. Our route derived additional interest from the fact that it was nearly conterminous with a frontier, a frontier not political but linguistic; for to the north of the line between Antioch and Aleppo the flowery Arabic language ceases, giving way to the laconic but expressive speech of the Turk. The history and distribution of languages in the Turkish Empire are subjects of deep interest as affording much insight into Turkish political conditions; and they provide anomalies in abundance. There are, for instance, villages in Asia Minor, inhabited solely by Greeks belonging to the Orthodox Church, where the Greek language is barely understood, and where priests read the services of the church in Turkish to make them

comprehensible to the people. There are also Turkish villages in Cyprus whose inhabitants only know Greek. Again, to take another kind of example, it is no uncommon thing to find Armenians writing and printing the Turkish language in Armenian characters. In Syria, and especially in the districts through which Antioch had disseminated art, learning, and, later, Christianity, the predominant language among educated people, prior to the Arab conquest, was Greek. The centuries of Seleucid and Byzantine rule had not availed, however, completely to hellenize the Syrian. Although he had absorbed a certain amount of Greek culture, his hellenization was, in most cases, superficial. Even in religion he made frequent efforts to break away from orthodoxy as enunciated by Greeks; and although the Nestorian, Monophysite, and Monothelete heresies were not formulated by Syrians, it is only in Syria and its neighbour lands that they have found permanent acceptance. When, therefore, the Arabs invaded Syria, the native population evinced more sympathy with their new conquerors, Semites like themselves, than with their late masters. For some time longer Greek continued to be spoken by the upper classes in the towns, and Syriac by the peasantry, but Arabic gradually took the place of both. Again, while many remained true to Christianity, townsfolk, peasantry, and Beduin, the bulk of the people embraced the religion of the Arabs, rarely because they were confronted with the alternative of Islam or the sword. Owing to the fact that Christians were compelled to pay two taxes, a capitation fee and a tax on land, from which Moslems were exempt, they were no mean source of revenue to the state; and for economic reasons the Khalifs dis-

couraged proselytism of too vigorous a nature. Syrian Christians were able, particularly under the Ommayad and Fâtimite princes, to follow their pursuits unmolested, take a share in the administration, and contribute appreciably to the culture of the land.

It was during the period of Byzantine rule in Syria, which began at the partition of the Roman Empire on the death of Theodosius, that a profusion of towns, churches, and monasteries arose on the *Jebel Sim'ân*, their style a development of that of Antioch, modified by the needs and symbolism of Christianity. An apse at *Dershîn* (there is not much certainty as to the identification of these ruined villages) and a church at *Qufr Tîn* gave us a foretaste of what we were to see at *Qal'at Sim'ân*, the most important monument of the *Jebel*. *Qal'at Sim'ân* is Arabic for the Castle of Simeon; and the Castle of Simeon is the monastery of St. Simeon Stylites, fortified at a later date by the Arabs. The saint who has given his name to this region was the leader of the school of ascetics who sought holiness by spending their lives on the summits of pillars. Simeon, whose eccentric method of acquiring merit found many imitators among eastern Christians, but was rigidly suppressed on its attempted introduction into the western Church, died in 459, after having edified an admiring world from the top of his 'pious perch' for the space of thirty years. After his death a large monastery was built on the site hallowed by his austereities; and around his column, of which the base alone now remains, rose the monastery church, the finest building of its kind. The church consists of four arms of equal length, placed in the form of a Greek cross; and the arms, in meeting, combine to produce a

remarkable octagon which, never roofed, was designed as the enclosure of the pillar. The decoration is very beautiful; and in the south porch, the most impressive part of the buildings, are capitals ornamented with the lovely Byzantine motive of the blown acanthus leaf. The extensive monastic buildings lie to the south-east of the church; and beyond them is a domed church whose octagonal nave is contained within a square outer structure. In scouring the surrounding country through our glasses we saw many other groups of buildings of the style and period of which Qal'at Sim'ân is the masterpiece, all built of the local grey stone and not easily distinguishable from the rocky outcrops of the Jebel. As soon, however, as we descended into the alluvial plain of the Orontes, the aspect of the country changed completely. Water was everywhere, bringing with it vegetation; and we overtook a band of Turcoman nomads carrying down to Antioch bales of the liquorice which is extensively cultivated around the shallow lake of El Bahra. To our right we now saw the snow-clad chain of the Amanus; and when, at night, we arrived at Birkeh, we dined off some excellent fish that abound in its rippling stream. In other respects Birkeh calls for no comment, but only a few miles distant from it is the interesting *tell* of Hârim. This *tell* is artificial and faced with stone, and is surmounted by a Saracenic castle which for a time was held by the Crusaders. From a chamber in the castle a narrow passage of ingenious construction leads down into the heart of the mound to a depth of about a hundred feet. Here a lateral opening gives access to the face of the *tell*, but the passage evidently continues. I observed a cross within a circle carved on one of the



QAL'AT SIM'ÂN, THE SOUTH PORCH



QAL'AT SIM'ÂN, LOOKING SOUTH



stones which line it, and a rosette on one of the steps. The villagers asserted that the passage not only went to the base of the mound, but under the moat and up the hill on the other side. Beyond Hârim the plain was flood-sodden and heavy; and no sooner were the baggage mules dragged out of one morass by their blaspheming mukâris than straightway they plunged into another. Presently we came to the banks of the swiftly flowing, much winding Orontes, camped at Jisr el-Hadid, the famous Iron Bridge which played so important a part in the military operations of the Crusades, and early on the following morning rode into Antioch.

Of cities once great which in later years have sunk into insignificance, not a few strive to pretend that the days of their greatness continue. Not so Antioch. Shrunken, and huddling to the Orontes within one tenth of the space which it formerly occupied, it makes no such endeavour. Nay, far from supporting the traditions of the past, it does its best still further to destroy them by using the ancient walls as a quarry on the rare occasions when it has need of stone. It is now a pretty little town of eminently provincial character, and its red roofs, as seen from the top of Mount Silpius, are distinctly picturesque. But there is no suggestion, except in the walls which enclose a wide expanse of cultivated plain and half a mountain, that here stood one of the greatest and richest cities of the world. Antioch taught architecture to Northern Syria; it now contains barely a fragment of its ancient buildings, and its arts and crafts are reduced to the making of slippers. It was long the nursery of Greek culture in Syria, so long, in fact, that coins of the

Crusading Princes of Antioch sometimes bore Greek legends ; no Greek is spoken there now. At one time the chronology generally adopted in the Levant was that of the Seleucid era of Antioch ; alone a few Jacobite monks, lurking forgotten in obscure monasteries, now retain it for their reckoning. "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch," which ranked as the third of Christian cities and became the seat of some half-a-dozen Patriarchs of different rites. I do not suppose that Antioch has seen a Patriarch for many centuries, or that the patriarchial throne in its shabby little Greek church has ever been occupied. Three priests to-day represent the Orthodox Church in the 'Metropolis and Eye of Christendom.'

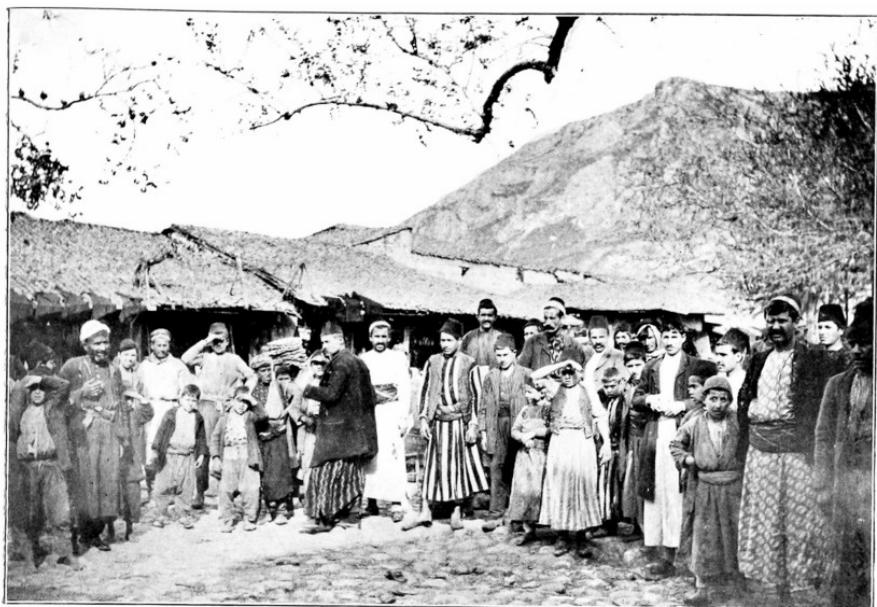
There is a tradition, mentioned by St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome and firmly believed in the middle ages, that St. Peter was the first Bishop of Antioch. The *festum Antiochiae Cathedrae Petri* was celebrated on the 22nd of February ; and by the south gate of Antioch stood the now vanished St. Peter's Church. This church was connected with an event which contributed very appreciably to the capture of Antioch by the Christians in the first Crusade. In June, 1098, after a siege of several months, the Crusaders were admitted into the town by a traitor, but the Moslem defenders still held the citadel on Mount Silpius in expectation of reinforcements from Kerboga of Mosul. With the citadel untaken and Kerboga's army on the way, the besiegers were little better off than the besieged ; and some deserted to the coast, while others advocated making terms with the enemy. At this juncture St. Andrew appeared in a vision to a poor Provençal soldier, Peter Bartholomew by name, and bade him

follow him to St. Peter's Church. The man did as he was told, and, on arrival at the church, saw St. Andrew disappear beneath the ground and reappear with the Holy Lance in his hand. "Ecce lancea quae latus aperuit unde totius mundi salus emanavit," said the saint, who then hid the Lance in the place whence he had taken it, enjoining on Peter Bartholomew to return to seek it with twelve companions, and to relate what he had seen to Count Raymond of Toulouse and to Bishop Adhemar of Puy. After being fortified by five further visions of St. Andrew, the man ventured to approach these great lords ; on the 14th of June the Lance was found, and the circumstances attending its discovery told. Count Raymond, whose piety often caused astonishment and sometimes inconvenience to his comrades-in-arms, at once believed the story of the visions, but the Bishop declared it to be 'nought but words.' And as the camp now divided into two parties, one which believed the Lance to be a true relic of the Crucifixion, and the other which did not, Peter Bartholomew declared his readiness to pass with it through the ordeal of fire. Two stacks of wood, fourteen feet long, four feet high, and one foot apart, were set alight ; and Peter Bartholomew, after being blessed, and holding the Lance, 'boldly and fearlessly' entered the narrow passage. As he was passing through it many, watching, saw a bird hover over his head. And, in truth, he emerged unhurt ; but the people, seeing the miracle, and crying out '*Deus adjuva*,' fell upon him in order to snatch pieces of his clothing as relics, so that he would have been killed had he not been rescued by Raymond Pelez, a noble knight. Indeed, so severe were the injuries inflicted

upon him by the crowd that he died twelve days after.

Cheered and emboldened by the discovery of the Lance, the Crusaders attacked Kerboga, whom they defeated on the 28th of June. A week later the citadel surrendered, and Antioch became the capital of a Christian principality under the Norman Bohemond, son of Robert Guiscard. Later, Raymond of Toulouse, Bohemond's rival, founded the Latin county of Tripoli.

One of the chroniclers relates that prior to the first Crusade Raymond made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. As he entered the Holy Places, he proffered his ducat, the usual fee, to the Moslem gate-keeper, but the man demanded more from so important a pilgrim. Raymond refused, and in the scuffle which ensued his right eye was knocked out. "He kept the eye," says the chronicler, "wrapped it in the corner of his garment, brought it to Rome, showed it everywhere, and thus aroused such indignation that great counts rose up, collected large armies, and marched on Constantinople." The Crusades were not, however, the result of this episode, or, indeed, of any sudden wave of emotion. The desire to wrest the Holy Land and the Holy City from the Infidel had long been nursed in the West, and was fed by the complaints of the pilgrims who, outlining year by year the routes of future Crusading armies, brought back tales of the wrongs endured by them and by the Christian population of Jerusalem at the hands of the Moslems. Europe was then passing from the barbarous age into one of sordid materialism curiously tempered with idealism; and it saw in the East a mysterious goal of high enterprise where men



IN THE BAZAAR, ANTIOCH



MOSQUE OF SULTAN IBRÂHÎM, JEBELEH



might win great fame for themselves on earth, and lasting reward in heaven. A crusade, with all that it involved, appealed strongly to the growing spirit of chivalry and adventure, and mediaeval literature proclaims how largely the theme preoccupied men's minds. While troubadours dwell upon the lighter sides of such an expedition, and gentle Jaufre Rudel sings of the *Princesse lointaine* over the seas, awaiting the coming of the Christian knight, the author of the *Chanson de Roland* is in more serious mood when he summons Charlemagne, the epic champion of Christendom, to lead his hosts eastward :

“ Charle est couché dans sa chambre voûtée ;  
Saint Gabriel de par Dieu lui vint dire :  
‘ Charles, convoque encor ta grande armée,  
Va conquérir la terre de Syrie.  
Tu secourras le roi Vivien d'Antioche  
Dans la cité que ces payens assiégent ;  
Là les chrétiens te réclament et crient.’ ”

The rapid spread of Islam along the southern shores of the Mediterranean, its activity in Spain, and its incursions into Sicily, precipitated the wish for a crusade ; but the eloquence of preachers and the religious enthusiasm aroused thereby were insufficient of themselves to make a crusade practicable. The co-operation of those prompted by military and commercial ambitions was required, and readily obtained.

The successes of ambitious Norman barons in Apulia and in Sicily had shown to the world that kingdoms could still be made and held by a strong right arm. If this was possible in Europe, why not in the East ? Here were profit and piety combined ; and to the religious element produced by the pilgrims' tales of

woe and the advance of Islam we must add the desire of able and impecunious younger sons to emulate Guiscard and his enterprising tribe in lands whose riches were proverbial, lands where there was no Emperor to advance embarrassing claims of suzerainty. The commercial element was supplied by the great maritime republics of Italy, by Amalfi, Pisa, Genoa, and Venice, whose eastern trade was of such vital importance that they could not fail to derive benefit from the conquest of the Holy Land. The part played by Venice in the fourth Crusade, and the tenacity with which one and all clung to their special privileges in the coast towns of Syria when the Crusading states were weak and in need of support, indicate the motive of their participation ; but they were as necessary, in their way, as priest and knight, and did not disguise their aims.

Impelled, therefore, by faith, love of glory, and love of gold, young and mail-clad Europe hurled herself time and again at the wise old East, spending much blood and energy to no purpose. It was more to the fallacy inherent in the scheme than to the disunion of the Crusaders that the failure of the Crusades was due. The tree of western feudalism could, with violence, be planted in an eastern garden, but neither the untiring efforts of King Baldwin, nor the unorthodox diplomacy of Frederick II., nor yet the belated perseverance of St. Louis, could make it to grow. Many years passed, however, before this was realized, and the hope of eventual success died hard. Even in the fifteenth century, the age of cynicism and doubt, it was strong enough to inspire, and to kill, by its nonfulfilment, so typical a product of the Renaissance as Aeneas Sylvius

Piccolomini. The most lasting tangible results of the Crusades were commercial ; but with the discovery of new waterways these, too, have long since disappeared. The only visible traces in the lands of the Crusades of those days of piety and cunning, of greed, violence, and holy zeal, are a few stupendous castles, a few ruined churches of golden sandstone, and here and there amidst the sallow Syrian crowd a flaxen-haired, blue-eyed, white-skinned man and woman, proclaiming in their persons their unmistakeable descent.

But to return to our wanderings. Between Antioch and Latakia we traversed the loveliest region of Syria, a region of mountain and forest and of many rivers running westward to the sea, a region, too, little known to travellers, to judge from the faultiness of maps. At the laurels and waterfalls of Daphne, where the nymph cheated Apollo of his design, we turned south and began to climb. To the green of the undergrowth on the lower slopes the Judas Tree lent a touch of more brilliant colour : higher up, orchards and their flowering hedges gave way to the fragrant Aleppo pine. That night we camped on the ridge of the Jebel el-Quseir by the village of Qurbas ; and the next day, having descended its further slope, at Jisr esh-Shogul. This is a big village named after the bridge of thirteen arches which here spans the Orontes, and we chanced to arrive at the time of its annual donkey fair. The place swarmed with donkeys of all sizes, shapes, and hues, with donkeys gaily caparisoned and donkeys that lacked their full complement of hide, with donkeys despondent and donkeys that brayed confidently the night through. We, also, had donkeys in our caravan, well-favoured

beasts which bore the cook and his satellites; and it will not surprise the reader to learn that on the morrow the best of them was missing. The result was a visit to the Qaimaqam, whom we found in his music room enjoying the strains of his private band. He was, it appeared, a man of fretful temper, and, like Saul, required music to soothe his troubled nerves. Hence a fiddler and one that played upon the lyre formed part of his establishment. But in the matter of the donkey he was prompt and businesslike. He promised that, if our beast could not be found, we could choose from three others which should be at our tent doors that evening; and he was as good as his word. We might have hesitated to exact the uttermost ass from an innocent, underpaid, and needy official had we not known full well that the Qaimaqam would take the opportunity thus afforded to mulct every ruffian in Jisr esh-Shogul of a donkey, both on account of past misdeeds, and in the hope that among so many the present culprit might be included. I do not doubt, nay, I confidently hope, that he derived a handsome profit from the occurrence. The old-fashioned Turkish system of administration had the merit of making it possible for notorious scoundrels to suffer for their evil ways, without the expensive and often vain formalities as to proof demanded by the more complicated procedure of the West.

But donkeys and their attendant worries were forgotten as on the morrow we journeyed onward by the pellucid waters of the Nahr ez-Zuq. At one time this lovely little stream cuts its way through rocky gorges, at another it flows peacefully along the verdant valley bed between hill-sides clad with pine. The forest bower

where we camped that evening was a place of pure delight, an enchanted nook

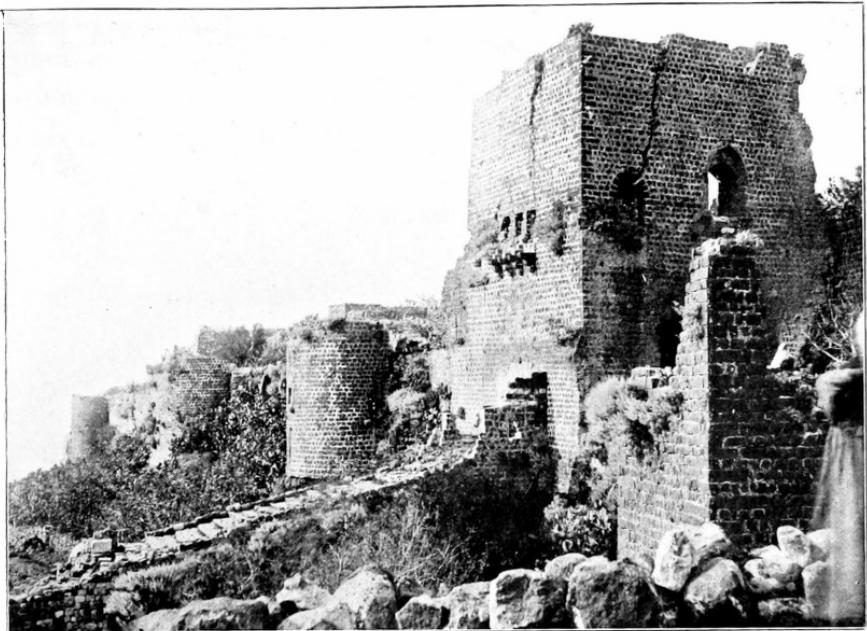
“whose tender Green  
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean.”

Here were solitude and peace, here was nature rarely seductive; and as I was lulled by the gentle sound of plashing water, I was filled with understanding and sympathy of the Turk’s conception of *keif*. Alas, that our “green days in the forest” ended on the following afternoon, when along a dusty *chaussée* we rode into Latakia. Nevertheless, the coast offered compensation in the shape of long gallops along its sandy marge and delicious bathes among caves and rocks. Except for two expeditions inland to the castles of Merkab and Sâfitâ, the remaining stretches of our journey lay by the sea; and thus we crossed the mouths of countless rivers, some by picturesque and decaying old bridges, many by plunging through their marshy waters and disturbing the wallowing buffalo. Also, we passed, day by day, large numbers of local sportsmen, engaged in the indigenous sport of hawking at small sea birds and quail.

Our next camping place was the little town of Jebeleh. Of its Roman theatre there remain several vaults and tiers, which the inhabitants use as a kitchen garden; its Mosque of Sultan Ibrâhim, with two colossal cypresses, is one of the most attractive mosques I have seen in Syria. Continuing past two Circassian villages, we came to another Bâniyâs, whose name is derived, not from Pan, but from Balanaea. Without stopping in the insignificant little township, we crossed the narrow strip of plain, and rode up to the black

castle of Merkab, which stands on a rocky spur of the Jebel Nosayrîyeh. The castle was until 1885 the capital of the qaza, and is still inhabited by Nosayrîyeh, and by orthodox Moslems, who use its mediaeval chapel as a mosque. To this castle the Emperor Isaac of Cyprus was committed by the Hospitallers, whom King Richard had appointed his keepers, and here closed that ignoble potentate's career.

It was somewhat surprising to see from the heights of Merkab a small island close to the shore some few miles to the south, for in the matter of islands the Syrian coast is very different from that of Asia Minor. In the days of the Phoenicians this island, then called Aradus and now Ruâd, played a part in history similar to that played in a later age by Zanzibar. From their tiny islet, not half a square mile in area, the Aradians went forth as seamen and soldiers into many parts, and by far the larger portion of their dominions lay opposite, on the mainland. Antaradus, the Crusading Tortosa and the modern Tartûs, was one of their colonies; another, a little further south, was Marathus, now an uninhabited site with extensive Phoenician remains. The town of Tartûs is all intermingled with the Crusaders' castle, from whose fragments its streets and houses emerge in picturesque and haphazard fashion; but its Church of Our Lady of Tortosa is singularly well preserved. This church enjoyed a considerable reputation in the middle ages for the miracles effected at its shrine; and during the course of St. Louis's Crusade the Sieur de Joinville obtained his master's leave to make a pilgrimage to it. St. Louis took advantage of the occasion to charge his faithful companion with a commission to buy for him



CASTLE OF MERKAB



BURJ SÂFÎTÂ



a hundredweight of camlets, a costly eastern stuff made of camel hair and silk. The camlets were bought, and the good Seneschal was also fortunate enough to obtain some relics, news of which was brought to the queen. When he returned to the king's headquarters, he sent one of his knights to the queen with a present of four pieces of the camlet; "and when the knight entered her apartment, she cast herself upon her knees before the camlets, that were wrapped up in a towel, and the knight, seeing the queen do this, flung himself on his knees also. The queen, observing him, said :

'Rise, sir knight, it does not become you to kneel, who are the bearer of such holy relics.'

My knight replied that it was not relics, but camlets, that he had brought as a present from me. When the queen and her ladies heard this, they burst into laughter, and the queen said :

'Sir knight, the deuce take your lord for having made me kneel to a parcel of camlets.'"

One Sunday morning we sailed from Tartûs across the strait to Ruâd, probably over the fresh springs in the sea from which the Aradians drew their water when supplies from the mainland were cut off. With its sea wall, its bastions, and its castle, the island suggests a tiny Rhodes, lacking only the windmills to complete the resemblance. Everything is on a minute scale, but I have seen few places more beautiful. And the view from its lighthouse tower not only includes Tartûs and its surroundings, but ranges over the snow-clad Lebanon which rises abruptly where the Nosayrîyeh Mountains tail away.

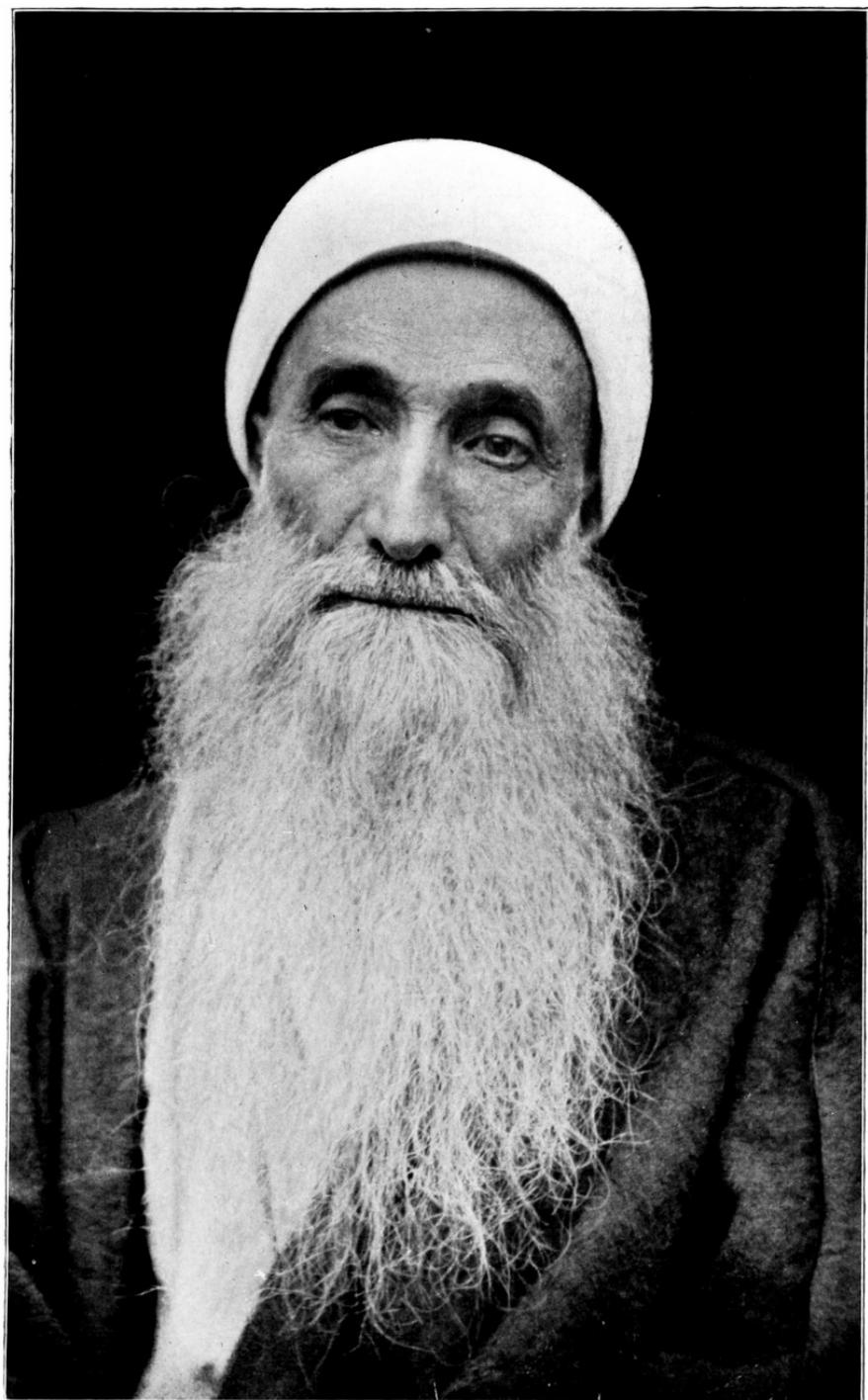
On one of the southermost eminences of the Jebel

Nosayriyeh stands the Hospitallers' castle of Sâfîtâ, which we saw, it may be remembered, from the tower of Qal'at el-Hosn. Only the large keep emerges distinctly from the confused mass of hovels into which the other parts of the castle have degenerated. The keep contained the chapel of the knights, a most unusual thing for the castle stronghold to do, and, what in Syria is even more unusual, the chapel has retained its use. The inhabitants of Sâfîtâ are Syrian Christians, and many of them have been to America, to the detriment of their manners and of their taste in dress. It cannot, unfortunately, be denied that the influence of the West, and of the Far West, is not always happy in its effects upon the Syrian. I am not now speaking of the upper classes, among whom are found many persons of European culture and taste, but of the lower classes, whose power of discrimination is necessarily more restricted. Such of the latter who, through emigration, have been subjected to that influence, are apt to affect unpleasantly the passer-by. What, it may be asked, are, in detail, the faults of this type of Syrian? He is prone to cease from honouring his father and his mother, believing himself to be better than they. Often he is afflicted with an insuperable aversion to manual labour. By some fatality, he exhibits a preference for the less edifying forms of western civilization rather than for its more attractive manifestations; and he discards his picturesque costume for a travesty of Occidental modes by which even the least aesthetic cannot fail to be offended. And if he is of literary bent, he rejects the plain tales of his own language, wherein a spade is called a spade and the imagination is taxed but little, for the more restrained but, oh, so much more tantalizing, more

piquant, more suggestive romances of, say, Marz el-Prevô or Dum Afîz. Arrogant to those of his countrymen whom he considers less advanced, less progressive than himself, intolerably familiar with Europeans unless it suits his purpose to cringe, he becomes by his contact with Occidentals neither more trustworthy nor more polite than nature had intended him to be. I admit that I am describing the type probably at its worst, and I should deeply regret if my remarks were taken to imply criticism of the efforts of the high-minded and self-sacrificing missionaries who labour on the coast of Syria. Although the missionaries are not altogether fortunate in their material, for it would seem as if the Syrian peasant were designed by Providence to remain an Oriental, their educational work has been a true boon to the country. To them is due, for example, the introduction of the printing press ; and were it not for the missionary Colleges of Beirût, the ignorant *hakîm*, with his futile nostrums and preposterous remedies, would not have been replaced in Syrian country districts by competent native doctors. Nor are natives the only ones to be thankful for their presence, as I myself have good reason to know. For as I rode in to Tripoli, the fever which for several days had been upon me became very much worse ; and my deep gratitude is due to Dr. Harris, the American Mission Doctor and Acting British Vice-Consul, who combined the skill appertaining to the former capacity with the hospitality of the latter, and set me on my feet once more.

Before bringing the tale of this journey to a close, I think it right to pause for a moment at the little port of Acre ; for with Acre is connected one of the few

religious movements of importance which have emanated from Asia since the birth of Islam. The Shiah belief with regard to the Messianic Advent of the Twelfth Imâm, or Imâm Mahdi, has been briefly stated in a previous chapter. In 1844 a young Persian, Mirza 'Ali Mohammed by name, proclaimed himself as the Bâb, or Gate, whereby communication was to be restored between the Twelfth Imâm and his followers on earth. A little later, he announced that he himself was the long-expected Mahdi ; and as such he was accepted by his rapidly growing band of followers. From the outset the sect encountered the hostility of the Persian Government, and in 1850 the Bâb was executed by its order in Tabriz. Before his death he designated as his successor a lad named Mirza Yahya, upon whom he conferred the title of *Subh-i-Ezel*, 'the Dawn of Eternity' ; and in 1852, in consequence of further persecution, Subh-i-Ezel, his elder half-brother Baha'u'llah, and such other Bâbi leaders as escaped with their lives, took refuge in Baghdad. Baghdad now became the headquarters of the Bâbis until the year 1864, when the Persian Government, alarmed at their increase, induced the Porte to remove them from their immediate proximity to the Persian frontier and to the shrines of Nejeb and Kerbela. They were accordingly transferred, as political prisoners, to Constantinople and later to Adrianople, where they remained for a period of four years. Here, although in exile, they were unable to escape from the disruptive tendencies which seem to assail most religious bodies. In A.H. 1283 (A.D. 1866-67) Baha'u'llah, who had been slowly displacing the more retiring Subh-i-Ezel in the active leadership of the sect, declared that he was the Mahdi, 'He whom God shall manifest,' and not



SUBH-I-EZEL, *aet.* 80

Facing p. 264.



only repudiated Subh-i-Ezel's position as the Bâb's successor, but asserted that the Bâb himself was only the herald of his, Baha'u'llah's, advent. The Bâbi community was rent in twain. Between the two parties, Ezelis and Baha'is, strife waxed fierce ; and charges of attempted poisoning were freely exchanged between the brothers.<sup>1</sup> At this point the Turkish Government intervened by separating the factions. Baha'u'llah and his followers were despatched to Acre ; Subh-i-Ezel and his party relegated to Famagusta, where they were found as State prisoners at the British occupation. Now occurred a curious phenomenon. Although doctrinally there was little to distinguish the two parties, the basis of the schism being a personal question, the one waxed exceedingly while the other waned. Rapidly the Ezelis dwindled to a handful, and soon were confined, almost entirely, to the members of Subh-i-Ezel's devoted family. Very austerey, and in poverty, Subh-i-Ezel continued to dwell in Famagusta, supported only by an allowance from the Government of Cyprus ; and he died there on the 29th of April, 1912, at the age of eighty-two, and was buried half a mile outside the walls, in a field given by a friendly Turkish judge. With him the Ezeli sect may be said to have expired.

Acre, on the other hand, has become the centre of a living force which is spreading far and wide, and is attracting to the little town pilgrims from many lands. Baha'u'llah died in 1892, and his son 'Abbâs, now known as 'Abdu'l Baha, was accepted as his successor by the majority of his adherents, among whom the designation of Baha'i has superseded that of Bâbi. The

<sup>1</sup> See E. G. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Bâb*, ii., pp. 365-9, Cambridge, 1891.

purpose of Baha'ism is twofold. It aims, in the first place, at the reformation of Islam, at shedding the dross of superstition and the tutelage of the priesthood, and at uniting Sunis and Shias into a regenerated whole. Its ultimate object is a wider one. By freeing all religions of doctrines and rites, by proclaiming as its only dogma a belief in God and in His manifestations, Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, and Baha'u'llah, it hopes to join the whole world in a religion of neighbourly love, peace, and goodwill towards men, dispensing with creeds, liturgies, and ceremonial. It tolerates the clergy to a certain point, and up to that point even commends them. Man, it says, has in his earliest spiritual weakness to support himself by props ; and his first prop is the priest. The priest is the tutor, the teacher, a very necessary person in the initial stages ; but he is not to continue when the pupil has no further need of him, when he has become, that is to say, no longer a prop but a hindrance. As man gradually moves upwards, the mission of the priest is accomplished, and all mankind will become a community of priests.

Baha'ism is now estimated to count more than two million adherents, mostly composed of Persian and Indian Shias, but including also many Sunis from the Turkish Empire and North Africa, and not a few Brahmans, Buddhists, Taoists, Shintoists, and Jews. It possesses even European converts, and has made some headway in the United States. Of all the religions which have been encountered in the course of this journey, the stagnant pools of Oriental Christianity, the strange survivals of sun-worship and idolatry tinged with Mohammedanism, the immutable relic of the



THE FUNERAL OF SUBH-I-EZEL: THE PROCESSION LEAVING FAMAGUSTA



THE INTERMENT OF SUBH-I-EZEL



Samaritans, it is the only one which is alive, which is aggressive, which is extending its frontiers instead of secluding itself within its ancient haunts. It is a thing which may revivify Islam, and make great changes on the face of the Asiatic world.



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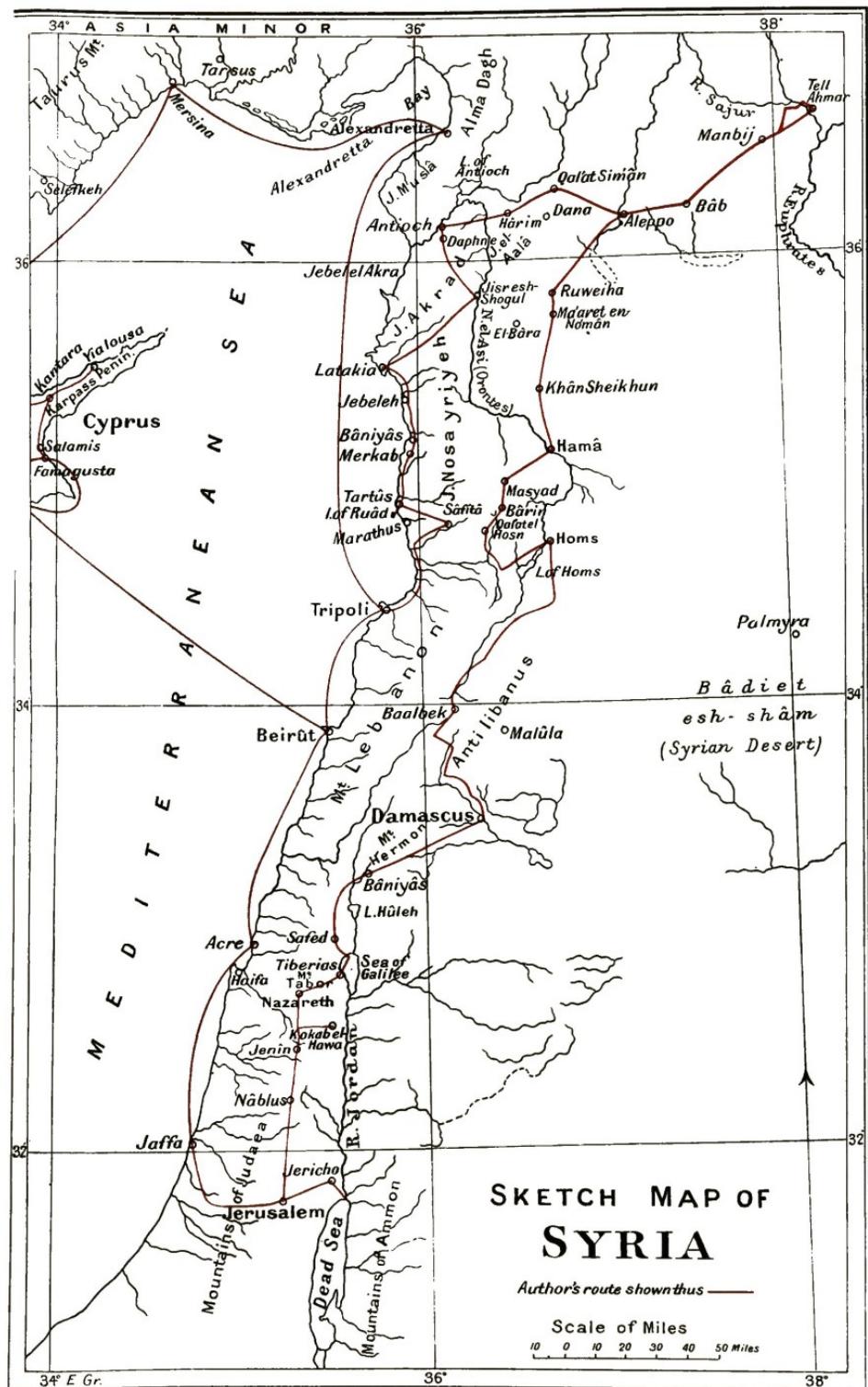
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## SKETCH MAP OF SYRIA

Author's route shown thus —

Scale of Miles  
10 0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

34° E Gr.

36°

38°













